A Practical

DISCOURSE

OF

Silence and Submission:

SHEWING,

That Good MEN

SHOULD

Poſſeſs their Souls in PATIENCE

UNDER THE

Severeſt Providences,

And particularly

In the Loſs of Dear Relations.

Preached at

St. *Thomas*'s Hoſpital, *Southwark*.

By *WILLIAM HUGHES*,
Hoſpitaler there.

Shall we receive Good at the hand of God, and ſhall we not receive Evil? Job 2. 10.

Peſſimi eſt Debitoris Creditore faceri comitium.
Sen. de Conſ. ad Mart. c. 10.

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To the Right Worſhipful,

Sir Robert Clayton, *Kt.*

Alderman of the City of *London*,

AND

Preſident of St. *Thomas*'s Hoſpital, in *Southwark*.

To the Worſhipful,

James Reading, *Eſq*;

Treaſurer of the ſaid Hoſpital.

AND

To the reſt of the Right Worſhipful, Worſhipful, and Worthy Governours *of the ſame.*

Right Worſhipful, &c.

THE *Divine Preacher* tells us; *'Tis better to go the Houſe of Mourning, than to the Houſe of Feaſting.* And there

is indeed great reaſon for his ſaying ſo. 'Tis ſomething, that this *latter* place commonly leaves Men Vainer, than it finds them. But 'tis a weighty one that he is expreſs in: the *former*; *That, is, the end of all Men, and the living will lay it to heart.* It ſhews; What all muſt come to: therefore, the need of being prepared accordingly. Now, that my Lot is fallen in a great Family of greater Sorrows, altho it be your greateſt Care to turn thoſe into the Speedieſt Joys; is no Abſurdity to affirm. I'm ſure, beſides the ſad Calamities of our Domeſticks, the Experience of my ſmall Apartment hath for theſe two Years paſt, by frequent and grievous Sickneſs, and by Death lately, met with loud Knels of Heavineſs.

vineſs. Nor may we doubt, but that many of your ſelves, ſome time or other, have heard ſuch doleful Leſſons. Nay, who can tell, how ſoon thoſe, yet exempted, may taſte of the ſame Bitter Cup; and perhaps drink deeper of it? So that a Diſcourſe, adapted to ſuch Circumſtances, cannot be unſeaſonable. Eſpecially, if it reſpect Preventing, Supporting, Delivering thence, and making wiſe Improvement thereof. All which Advantages theſe Papers aim at: and, it is hoped, do not utterly miſs their Mark.

Unto your Worſhips, the *Eſſay*, ſuch as 'tis, is moſt humbly dedicated: as to It's Author's Patrons; and moſt worthy of more Honour than is within his reach to pay you. To forbear (tho not forget)

your kind Reſpect unto Himſelf: nor to inſiſt upon the moſt *Signal*, but *Secret*, Charities of ſeveral of you, unto many hundred Pounds, (which, *tho you would not have your left hand know what your right hand did*, could not be quite concealed; indeed, *ſuch Rare Examples ought not*): Your Joint Compaſſion, and Tender Care of the Many Poor in this Great Hoſpital, proclaim your Merit, hardly *Imitable*; I'm ſure, truly *Admirable!* For, beſides your Conſtant Proviſion of the Beſt Food, and Phyſick, and Surgery, that you can get; with very meet, both Firing, Lodging, and Attendance, you are now *New-building of their Houſe*; and at the vaſt Expence of many Thouſand Pounds. Whereby, at once you prevent their being Buried

ried Alive in the Ruins of an Old-decayed-Place; and likewiſe provide for, Better-Preſerving Life, and Sooner-Reſtoring Health, unto them, by a far more *Airy*, *Sweet*, and *Pleaſant Dwelling*, than before they had: or ever could have hoped for, *But from* **Your Selves.** That the God of Mercy, who firſt inclined you, may preſerve and proſper you, to the finiſhing of this Earthly Tabernacle for his Poor; and, in due ſeaſon, Reward you with an *Habitation not made with hands*, *Eternal in the Heavens*, is the Prayer of,

Right Worſhipful, &c.

Your very Humble Servant,

W. Hughes, *Hoſpitaler*.

To my Beloved Friends,

THE

Officers and Patients,

OF

St. *Thomas*'s *Hoſpital*, in *Southwark*.

Beloved Friends,

THE *Calamities of this Houſe in general, and the particular Diſtreſſes of moſt of us, call aloud upon us, to ſeek a* Refuge from the Storm; *at leaſt, to get ſome Shelter, till it be over. My hopes are, that theſe Sermons will ſomewhat Contribute to thoſe Ends; if due Regard be had unto them. And tho' mine own Afflictions were their Midwife; yet, being thus brought forth, they may be Uſeful unto Others alſo. I ſhould be very glad to do you Good from the Preſs; notwithſtanding ſo many of you ſlight my Service from*

from the Pew, and Pulpit. For to my Grief I ſpeak it, 'tis very doubtful, whether a fifth Part of you (that can) be conſtant at the Chappel. 'Twas altogether otherwiſe in the former Years of my Miniſtry here. And I am ſure, my Pains *are nothing abated: but my* Judgment *ſomewhat improved ſince. But* then *indeed we had the Happineſs of a Steward, who made Conſcience of the Duty of his Place; and did not only duly come himſelf, but brought Others with him; and puniſhed thoſe who, cauſeleſſly, abſented. And I am fully of Opinion, that True Religion was as thriving then among us, as ever it hath been ſince. Do not* our Publick Orders *tell all Officers here (as well as Patients;) that,* without reaſonable Excuſe, *they mit be conſtant at the Publick Worſhip? And doth not every Officer* Enter *on his Place upon thoſe Terms? Can it be* Conſcience *then; to take the Wages, and not do the Work? Will not* That *ſay; let alone the Salary, or buckle to the Service? How many, notwithſtanding, are never preſent? So vain a* Coyneſs *with ſome, and vile* Prophaneſs *with others, hath of late times prevailed among us! Were there juſt Quarrel at the Publick Prayers; (as I know no Perſon with us,*

that

that hath any; or justly can have;) must Sermons suffer for that, however? Hath Any *a Grudge against the Minister? Surely a Wise Man will not sullenly leave his Food, because the Cook hath angred him? But if the Bread of Life be given you here; and you refuse it: is not the* Giver, *more contemned, than he that brings it? Beware of their most heavy Guilt*; whose Souls *(they said)* loathed that light Bread. *For that was spoken against* God, *as well as* Moses, Num. 21. 5. *Tho, you are told expressly; to* Despise, *or* not to Hear *(which are both One) a Gospel-Minister, is serving* both the Son and Father too, *at the self-same rate*, Luke 10. 16. *If a very few can plead*, Their Relations else-where, *in their own Defence. Why? Without medling with the Merits of the Cause; (and beside what was said about twenty lines before) Is not the Plea as good; to justifie an hungry Man's Refusal of wholesome Food at his loving Neighbour's; because, forsooth it was not set upon his own Table, where he did use to Eat? Let us be faithful to our Souls. Is not the want of Spiritual Appetite, our great Distemper? Did we* hunger, thirst, *and* long *for God: would we be so Coy, as to meet him only* where *we please; and* when

our-

ourſelves think fitting? Surely we would be glad at any place, and as often as we could, to enjoy his bleſſed Company in his holy Ordinances. We ſhould flock as Doves to our Windows: *and the* Feet of them that bring glad Tydings, *whoever they were, would be beautiful in our Eyes. Were we ſo ſenſibly affected, as we ſhould be, with our weak Faith, chill Love, faint Hope, earthly Mind, and ſtrong Corruptions; the Opportunities for quickning Graces, and killing Luſts now neglected, if not deſpiſed, would be more welcome to us; and be with greater Diligence improved by us. But if a* Form of Godlineſs without the Power *be all we mind (ſo, 'tis with thouſands:) as that will eaſily ſerve with Men, tho' not with God; ſo 'tis no marvel, that our ſorry Humours, and not ſerious Conſcience, ſteer our Courſe for us. Well:* Manna lies abundantly about our Tents *at preſent: but it may ſo happen (I'm ſure our Sins deſerve it) that ſuch Scraps as theſe, now reckon'd only worthy to be thrown under Table, may e're long be accounted Dainties. Black Clouds are over us: Diſtreſſes near us: Grim Death, moſt certainly is not far from us. O that we may be Wiſe, and husband ſo that little inch of Time*

yet

yet left, in true Christian Praying, Hearing, Reading, Meditation, and holy Walking, that we may be prepared for a Blessed Eternity: This is the hearty Desire of,

Your Souls Faithful,

and Truth-telling *Friend,*

W. H.

ERRATA.

PAge 4. l. 9. for 3*dly*, r. 2*dly*, p. 10. l. 29. after *thought*, a Period. p. 15. l. 23. r. *Impatience*. p. 18. l. 10. r. *afflicted* for *affected*. p. 20. l. 23. after *them*, Coma. p. 33. l. 5. r. *Blood*. p. 39. l. 19. after *it*, r. *self*. p. 41. l. 5. after *Bar*, r. *thereto*.

A Practical Diſcourſe ON The Severeſt Providences, &c.

PSALM XXXIX. ix.

I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; becauſe thou, Lord didſt it.

MAN *is born unto trouble*, (ſaith holy *Job*) *as the ſparks fly upwards*; which conſtantly is the nature of them. And to the certain truth of that Aſſertion, Towns, Cities, and Courts; in Pagan, Turkiſh, and Chriſtian Countries, do ever and anon bear ample Teſtimony. For there is neither Quality, Age, nor Sex of Mortals can plead a Priviledge, to be exempted thence. But, of all other Men, the *truly Pious* have the moſt cauſe to expect their ſhare therein; and leaſt reaſon, *truly*, to complain thereof. That bleſſed Book, whereto they are not ſtrangers, as others are, informs them; that it is their Lot, *to have their Evil things here, and their Good hereafter.* But, the mean while, 'tis far from juſtifing their raiſing Mole-hills into Mountains; and making of their Troubles a great deal worſer than indeed they are. Nay, it condemneth, juſtly, and ſeverely, *Laying the Products of their own*

Follies to the Fault of God; as if he dealt not fairly by them, when, in truth, 'tis they fall foul upon themselves; both in the bringing, and the bearing all they suffer.

Now, having often seen this guilt too much abroad; and being myself more than once, (so it hath seemed meet to the Righteous Providence) in danger of plunging into the same Gulf; I held it necessary for the Common Interest of Christianity, *as well as my own*, to make Enquiry after, and to find out the means, whereby good People may recover from, and not relapse into, a case so dangerous. My thoughts then, being once upon Enquiry, soon lighted on this welcome Text. And truly, 'tis an excellent Remedy! which also I nothing doubt, will prove successful where 'tis duly used. The Use whereof, I think, should be according to the Method my following Discourse prescribeth.

Context.] The Psalm doth plainly manifest, that its Author, *David*, was labouring under a very sore Distress. Whether it arose from *bodily Sickness*, as some have thought, or the *Rebellion of his Darling*, *Absalon*, as others are of Opinion, or from any other Cause, (as many might be gues'd at) since none's expres'd; to make strict Search about it, would savour more of fruitless Curiosity, than of useful Industry; and in the Issue, leave us at Uncertainty too. This he, that runneth through the whole, may quick-

Vid. *Chrys. Calv. Pisc. Mo-nis*, &c.

quickly read, as written there, in Capital Letters, *That there was such a Storm* (from whencesoever it rose) *that had like to have shipwrack'd all.* It seems, as if the Rigging were torn in peices, the Hull shrewdly shatter'd, and the Fraight likewise in manifest jeopardy to perish in the Deep. The Afflicted, in Spirit, Soul, and Body, to all appearance, receiv'd no little Dammage by the same. For Proof whereof, 'twere very easy to offer several Instances from the Psalm, would it not be too tedious particularly to insist upon them.

However, something must appear in viewing of the Parts thereof: which are these two in general:

1. The Psalmist's Procedure with himself, under his great Affliction; and that in the two first Verses; resumed also in my Text.

2. The Effects of that Procedure with himself upon him, in the following Verses, even to the end.

1. As to the former: The course he takes (as you may read) is, to seal his Lips, and silence his Heart too. That not a Word might slip from *thence* to shew one discontented Thought towards God *there*. Thus he stops his Mouth, and stills his Mind at once; that no Complaint, or any Murmure might be with him against the Divine Providence, for the severer Methods used towards him. But yet (Good Man) herein it hapned unto him, as it sometimes may to the best Archer in the

World; who to prevent his Arrow's falling short, levels so high, that he over-shoots his Mark. For the Holy Psalmist also (though to his Grief) doth over-do his Work for a little while. *He held his peace from good:* but thence *his sorrow was stirred*, Verse 2. latter end. But the fault is soon amended, by the new Aim he takes. As will be seen by,

3. The Fruit of his thus dealing with himself: which, truly, was not to be repented of. And 'twas two fold:

1. *Internal.* All Complaints, and Repinings too, against God's *Justice* being stifled, his Meditations are set warm at work upon his *Mercy:* Those raise his passionate Desires after him, and they force their passage through his Lips unto him. *His heart was hot, the fire burnt*; and then his Tongue stood still no longer. Verse 3. *Then spake I with my tongue*, saith he. Thus comes the other Effect.

2. *External. viz.* Hearty Prayer unto the just and gracious God, made up of three particlar Petitions first; and then a general one, as the Conclusion.

1. He begs particularly: 1. For an affecting Sence of his Frailty and Vanity: *Make me to know mine end*, &c. Verse 4. And pleadeth humbly for Success herein, to Ver. 8. 2. Then for *pardon of his sin*, Ver. 8. *Deliver me from all my transgressions*, &c. Using my Text for furtherance of his Suit. And lastly, He prays *Deliverance* from his Afflictions also: *Remove*

thy

thy ſtroke, &c. Ver. 10, 11. urging for *pity*; both the Load that lay upon him, and *his*, and all others, Inability to ſtand up under Divine Diſpleaſure.

2. He concludeth with a general Supplication, for a gracious Anſwer to his former Petitions: and for prevailing, repreſents his ſad Condition as a moſt ſuitable Object of Divine Compaſſion, Ver. 12, 13.

But I muſt return to the ſecond particular Petition; whereto I did obſerve, my Text was added as an Enforcement of it.

David, Ver. 8. begging pardon for his Sins, which were the cauſe of all his Troubles; and which, particularly, made wicked Men to open their mouths againſt him; begging pardon, as I was ſaying, in theſe words, *Deliver me from all my tranſgreſſions, and make me not the reproach of the fooliſh*; now, that this humble Suit might ſpeed the better, readily yields, and plainly enough makes this Confeſſion: 'That 'notwithſtanding their Reproaches, as well as 'all his other Troubles, were moſt unjuſt from 'Men; yet they came not without the juſteſt 'reaſon *from the Lord* upon him. And there-'fore he had not one Word to ſpeak, nor 'Thought to think, againſt the ſame: *I was* 'dumb, (ſaith he) *I opened not my mouth*, &c.

Thus ſtands the Text in relation to the Context: But if we conſider it in its ſelf, then it gives us,

1. A fresh Account of *David*'s Carriage under his great Distresses.
2. The important Reason why he did so.

1. The former *here: I was dumb, I opened not my mouth*, where the latter Phrase ascendeth higher than that before it. *Both* importing plainly; that as he did not speak at all, so he never so much as offer'd it neither. Yea, and the *Hebrew Verb*, in the latter Clause, being of the Future Tense doth intimate, that he would not ever make any such attempt in time to come. And this demonstrates the absolute silence and perfect satisfaction his Soul was brought unto under that heavy Providence, whatever it was, that lay upon him. For as when the Waves don't swell the Winds are still; so when the Mouth makes no complaint, the Heart doth *use* to be at rest. And 'tis our Saviour's saying, *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*, Matth. 12. 34.

2. The latter part is *there: Because thou, Lord, didst it.* As who should say, 'Whatever influence *second Causes* may have had 'immediately upon my present Troubles, and 'whatever Imputation I may justly lay on Persons, or on Things, for what I suffer, I must 'not here abide, but pass on further, through 'them and beyond them, to the *first Cause* of 'all: *Thou, Lord, didst it.* This was like holy *Job*; who, for all the mischief *Satan*, the *Chaldeans*

deans and *Sabeans* wickedly did him, looks higher to the righteous Hand of God, and humbly bows before him, ſaying, *The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away; and bleſſed be the Name of the Lord*, Job 1. 21. We ſee Good Men are utterly unlike the ſottiſh Cur, which ſnarleth at the Stone that hits him, until he dangers breaking of his Teeth in gnawing it, without regard unto the Hand that threw it. The Ungodly commonly are thus guilty; and are reproved juſtly by the Prophet for it, *Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not ſee*, Iſai. 26. 11. But the Pious practiſe otherwiſe, as we find; and thence find alſo cauſe to ſtoop to God, and *poſſeſs their Souls in patience* under all their Sufferings. And that there is ſufficient reaſon ſo to do, we ſhall ſee anon; when, beſides all other Arguments, it will appear particularly, what a prevailing influence the *latter* part of my Text hath on the *former*.

In order whereunto, ſince there is juſt preſumption, that this great Example is obliging to all other Perſons in like Circumſtances, let this Propoſition ſeriouſly be conſidered by us, *viz.*

Propoſ.] *A Godly Perſon is to be ſtill and ſilent, and by no means impatient under the heavieſt Hand of God upon him.*

Now this Propoſition being plain, and very intelligible in all the Terms thereof, we have

only need of, 1. A further Confirmation of it. 2. A fair Solution of some Objections. 3. and lastly, Some Guidance for the better Application of the whole unto our selves for good. Whereof in order. And,

1. *Proof, by Examples and Arguments.*

1st, To make full Proof, I shall produce two kinds of Evidences, *viz.* Plain Examples, and Powerful Arguments, and with a good stock of both from the Holy Scriptures. I begin with *Plain Examples.*

I. *Examples.*] They shall be Seven or Eight, and every one well deserving special Observation.

I will take them in that order the Scriptures set them: And so begin with,

1. *Moses.* That the most wise and gracious Providence saw meet to exercise this most eminent Saint with various Tryals, and some that had much sharpness in them, the Book of God bears ample testimony: nor is it silent about that even and quiet Temper wherein his Soul was preserved under them. The danger of his Life from the hands of *Pharaoh*, at his first appearance, in one of his Brethrens cause, against an *Egyptian*, made him to fly the Country for his safety. But he * *endured it*, saith the Text, and left no Murmuring nor Complaints behind him; no, nor carried he any with him, that

* Heb. 11. 27.

that we can find, *Exod.* 2. 15. His Brethren likewiſe often dealt ſo unkindly by him, and their Inſolencies towards him (notwithſtanding his moſt conſtant and tender concernment for them) were ſo inſufferable, that the righteous God doth eſpouſe the quarrel, and is provoked to deſtroy them, root and branch, for the ſame. Yea, and he promiſed *Moſes* to make of him a Nation mightier and greater than they were, if he would conſent thereto. But he, good Man, bears all with patience from *Them*, and is moſt inſtant with *God* for ſaving of them; and ſo requites them good for evil. Why, tho' * *Aaron* and *Miriam*, that came out of the ſame Womb with him, *affronted and reviled him*, (unjuſtly we are ſure, becauſe God was offended with them highly for the ſame) yet he takes it quietly; and *begs*, and *procures God's pardon to them for it*, Numb. 12. 9, 13. Nay, when the Wife of his Boſom taunts him to his face, and at the ſame time the Face of God was frowning on him alſo, yet is he the ſame Man ſtill, *Exod.* 4. 24, 25.

Exod. 32. 10, 11. Num. 14. 17, 19. Deut. 9. 18, &c.

* Numb. 26. 59.

Should not *we* think, that theſe were none of them ſlight Afflictions, tho' ſome more ſharp than others? Would they not eaſily warp *us* to impatience under them? But as it is written, That he was *the meekeſt man upon the face of the earth*, Numb. 12. 3; doubtleſs 'twas meant,

meant, that he was not only so *towards Men, but towards God also.*

However, you shall yet hear greater things than these.

2. *Aaron*, 'Tis true, he had great Frailties in him, and like Afflictions on him; but still he hath this excellent Character given him, *The Saint of the Lord*, Psal. 106. 16. Now this Saint hath a bloody Breach made by an angry God upon his Family, and not for any personal Crime of his neither; nay, the Method was not usual, but extraordinary, and full of terrour: His Sons make a *daring*, but it proved a *dear*, Adventure. They *offered strange fire before the Lord*; and a more strange *fire from the Lord falls down upon them, and devoured them*, Levit. 10. 1, 2, 3. Fire, in it self, is a very furious and frightful Element; but this, being not *the fire that burned in the bush, and burnt it not*, Exod. 3. 2, 3. nor that which carried up *Elijah* into Heaven; so far from hurting him, as making of him happy, and putting him out of the reach of Hurt for ever: No, *but a fire from the Lord*, saith the Text; who *is a consuming fire*, Heb. 12. 29: especially to bold Offenders; that are as dried Stubble before him. This offers one terrible Circumstance to our thoughts, Moreover, this Fire falls down, not upon the good Man, *Aaron*'s, House, or Goods, or Cattel; any of which might have had dread enough therein: but on his *Children*, on his *Sons*, his Sons that were *God's Ministers*; nor upon

upon *one* alone, but *two* at once: not in the *Fields*, or in a private *Houſe*, where poſſibly it might have been concealed, at leaſt but little notice taken of it: but in the *Tabernacle*; and at God's *Publick Worſhip*; and in *their Miniſtration* there; and before the face of *all the Congregation*. Here is an heap of Circumſtances, not one of which but carrieth horrour and aſtoniſhment with it: but *all*, *together*, are utterly confounding. Well, but hereupon how doth the good, but ſad Father, behave himſelf? What? Doth he fret, and fume, and vex his Soul to death again? No, no. Doth he rage, and rave, and flie in the face of God upon it? 'Twas further from him. *Jehoram*'s great, but wicked Meſſenger, in a time of Diſtreſs, would ſay, *This evil is of the Lord; why ſhould we wait for the Lord any longer?* 2 Kings 6. 33. He bids adieu to God; and let him find ſome other Attendants, if he pleaſe. *Job*'s naughty Wife would have prompted him to relieve himſelf, by *curſing God, and dying together with his ſons*, Job 2. 9. But this *pious Perſon* was of another ſpirit: for ſaith the Text, *Aaron held his peace*. His ſilent Soul ſeal'd up his lips; and the ſubmiſſion of his heart kept his mouth cloſe ſhut. He knew *who did it*: and to undo God's Work, ſo much as by a *word* or *thought*; no Creature ought to make one attempt. The leaſt diſlike abetted, bids all (in Humane reach) unto it: No, when God hath done, he will not begin, but end together with him, and be moſt humbly

lay prostrate to him, *He held his peace.* A lovely Copy, and well worth the writing after.

3. *Eli* comes next, and against this good old Man (though under much Infirmity) the Almighty dips his Pen in Gaul and Vinegar. And truly they are sharp and bitter things that are written in the sacred Book against him, and his Family with him. 'Tis not the pruning Branches, or lopping off some greater Boughs; but 'tis the digging up by the very Roots, that is insisted on. And for his full assurance, he must be certified once and again thereof. First by a nameless *Prophet*, and then by his Darling-pupil, *Samuel.* The former tells him from the mouth of God, that, *The days come that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house; and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever*, Chap. 2. 31, 32. with much more terrible Tydings besides this. And the *latter*, That *God would perform against Eli all things which he had spoken concerning his house; and that he would judge it for ever*, Chap. 3. 13, &c. with other Threats like those. Well now: how doth this aged Father entertain the doleful News? Doth he dispatch the Messenger that brought such unwelcome Tydings? Or so much as wish unto him *Micaiah*'s *Doom* from wicked *Ahab*, *To be clapt in goal, and be fed with bread and water of affliction?* Doth he curse his harder Fates, whereby he was chained

1 Sam. 3. 11, &c.

Chap. 2, & 3.

ed unto such unavoidable Misery; and like the *Desperate* * *Julian*, go off the Earth with bidding a Defiance to the God of Heaven? As much unlike those Tempers, as Heaven is unto Hell. 'Tis taken by him without the least Complaint; and without so much as any Token of Regret. If you feel his Pulse, there's nothing of a Feavour on him. The very Attendants of Impatience are driven into Exile by him. Hear his own words, *It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good*, Verse 18. As who should say, 'All are his own, and he may, 'therewithal, and ought to do what is best 'pleasing to himself. Who are we, entire De'pendants on him, to call him to account a'bout his matters? God past a Sentence that seem'd hard indeed; but this good Man approves it. Here was Contentment unto admiration.

* *Qui, manu sanguine sua repleta, & in aera sparsa, dixit*; Vicisti Galilæe. *Theod. Hist.* 4. 25.

Perhaps you'll say, But Judgment was not executed yet, onely threatned. Right, else 'twould have been too late to have enquired how he took the Tydings, when he was not? But the double Assurance, that a *Besom of Destruction* was ready to sweep him, and by no means to be prevented by him, was enough (to speak as Men) to strike a terrour of Distraction on him. But yet when others (who are meer Mortals) might have proved like a tempestuous Sea, we find with him the profound-

elt

eſt Calm. Oh! what a Pattern for our Imitation?

4. *David* is Fourth: And how doth he acquit himſelf, when the provoked Majeſty of Heaven ſtrikes even to death that Child he ſo much laboured to preſerve in life? *While it was yet alive* (ſaith he) *I faſted and wept: for I ſaid, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore ſhould I faſt? Can I bring him back again? I ſhall go to him, but he ſhall not return to me*, 2 Sam. 12. 22, 23. If you reflect upon the beginning of this Chapter, and bring down your eyes unto theſe Verſes read, you will find this Judgment on his Child was but one *link* of that long *Chain* prepared for him by the Prophet *Nathan*, from the mouth of God: and when a ſingle link of any Chain is touching of us, it ſhews the reſt are drawing after, and that the whole will quickly reach us. Beſides, this Puniſhment alſo had thoſe Sins that were the *Parents* of it, engraven in ſuch Capital Letters upon its Forehead, that though the Prophet brought him a Pardon ſealed for his own Life, the *way* of bringing his foul Tranſgreſſions into freſh remembrance, could not but create as freſh, both bluſhings, ſtartlings, and convulſions in his Conſcience for ſuch great Miſcarriages. Moreover, the Child we ſpeak of, was very dear unto him; witneſs his deep Humiliation on behalf thereof in *Faſting*, *Prayer*, and *lying on the Earth all night*, Verſe 16, 17.

in

in spite of the Importunity of his Counsellors unto the contrary; if possible to have gotten a Reprieve, at least, from Heaven for it. And lastly, his Servants were afraid to impart the Tydings of the Child's Death to him, for fear he should have done himself a Mischief upon hearing of it: As the *Hebrew* Phrase importeth *; and both the *Syriack* and the *Arabick* Version read.

* וְיַעַשׂ רָעָה

* *Procul dubio malum sibi inferet.*

b *Ne malum sibi inferat.*

Now all these Considerations put together make it fully manifest; that this Stroke of Providence must needs fall very heavy; and certainly was enough to shake him sorely; if not sink him utterly to the Ground.

Yet mark his Stilness under so great a Storm. Whilst the Child was living, he did his utmost to preserve the Life thereof. But when 'twas Dead, What had he else to do; *but at the least to acquiesce in what the Lord had done?* And note, what weighty Arguments he stops the mouth of all Impatients by. And they are three,

1. " 'Twere most *Unreasonable* to Afflict my " self (saith he) for this Affliction any longer. " *Wherefore should I fast:* i. now when the " Child is Dead? Produce just Cause, or any " colour of Reason for that: if any of you are " capable so to do. Reason is so far from " Patronizing such a Practice, that it quite " abandons it; as carrying,

2. " Per-

2. " Perfect *Vanity*, and impertinent *Folly* " in the face thereof. *Can I bring him back a-* " *gain? i.* to life. *Kings* can do much, in- " deed. And *good Kings*, in all reason, should " be able to do more than other. (Now in " this number *David* was.) But this is above all " Mortal Art and Power. The *King of Kings* " alone is sufficient for such Work.

3. To conclude: " I have other business, " and of far greater consequence upon my " hands, saith this great Man. Instead of " foolish and fruitless afflicting of my thoughts " in the bringing of him back; 'tis my grand " concernment to bethink me of, and prepare " myself for, * going unto him. " Whose turn is next; God only, " and no Mortal, knoweth. But " this I know, *that I must go to him*; " how soon I know not; *He can-* " *not return to me.* Here lies the Art of putting such an Affair into its right Method. And proves the best Improvement of what we may account the worst of Providences. So shall the loss of some *dear Friend* tend to the saving of a *dearer self*, our precious Soul.

* *Cur immoderate ferat ab ille, quem mox subsequeris?* Tert. de Patient. c. 9.

This is the Example of that Person, who was *A Man after God's own heart*; and who elsewhere too, and in a worser Case, was yet content, *That God should do unto him, as seemed good in his eyes*, 2 Sam. 15. 26.

And are not these such Steps as are most worthy to be trod in by us?

5. *Job.*

5. *Job.* Next let us look on *Job*: On him this glorious Character is bestowed, even by God himself, as to a very NONE-SUCH, *viz. A perfect, and an upright man; that feared God, and eschewed evil*, Chap. 1. 8. Nay, his Judge, and the Judge of all the World, declares him innocent, as to a Guilt deserving such a Punishment as was falling on him. And, for full proof thereof, makes him a full Amends, and ample Reparation for all his Losses, afterwards. Chap. 42. 10, &c. But that, as yet, could not come under the Sufferer's Cognizance. Well: this so excellent a Person's Calamities assault him like the Billows of the Sea; where furious Tempests force them foreward, one upon another's back, till all before them is overwelmed by them. First, the bad News of the *Sabeans* seizing on his Oxen and his Asses, and slaying of his Servants that attended them. Then, how the *Lightning* had consumed his Sheep and Shepherds all together. Next, that the *Chaldeans* fell upon his Camels, and destroyed their Keepers too. And last of all, (with scarcely a time to breathe between them, as we say,) the frightful *Death of his Dearest Children*, Chap. 1. 14, 15, no fewer then seven Sons, and three Daughters, by the sudden fall of an House upon them, is brought unto his Ears. Now, when so sad a Story, with all the frightful Circumstances of it, shall be considered seriously by us, shall not we be apt to start these questions: *What flesh could bear it:*

what heart of steel but must sink under it? Well, grant the Case be insupportable unto meer Humanity: yet, *Nothing is too hard for God.* Gen. 18. 14. *For tho' the flesh and the heart doth faile*, where *He is the strength of the heart*, Ps. 73. 26. there is full support notwithstanding. *His grace is sufficient*, 2 Cor. 12. 9, and can give Conquest, and make Triumphant, when the other is utterly overcome and routed. See *here* a Proof! *Job* is affected greatly, and his Soul, affected deeply. *God's hand is very heavy upon him.* But 'tis far from driving him into Rebellion. The most humble Submission is practised by him: *He worshiped, and said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave; and the Lord hath taken away: and blessed be the name of the Lord*, Job 2. 21. Where we see plainly; 1. He disclaims his own right to any Mercies. 2. Proclaims God's sole Interest in them also. 3. Thanks him heartily for his *Rod*, as well as for his *Staff*. And what lively Arguments are these of a Mind acquiescing fully in God's good Pleasure; altho' its one great Pain? Thus 'twas with this good Man: Nay, when the *Hurricane*, that before had overturned his Estate, destroyed his Servants, and all his Children, reacheth at last his Person with a tremendous Judgment; both *an unusual, and universal kind of shameful, loathsome, and painful leprosie*, Job 2. 7. having great advantage, to his other Afflictions, for forcing him unto Impatience, and Desperation;

on; and when *She* that lay in his Bosom (and whose Duty 'twas to have administred Help and Comfort to him, in his Distress,) instead of cooling, labours to inflame the *Fever* of his Soul, and puts him upon Raving like a *Bedlam*, or a *Devil* rather, Verse 9. How doth he play the *Man* (shall I say) yea, with a Vertue more than manly, act the *Saint*; and instead of being overcome, comes off with Victory? Thus, he both justly rebukes his *Wife*, and vindicates *God: Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil*, Verse 10. 'Q. D. Must we be cocker'd so, as to have all 'Days, and no Nights? the Sun shine constantly, but not a Shower, or a Cloud? The Summer to last all the Year, and Winter never 'take its turn? most foolish, fond, and proud 'Presumption! That *Man*'s Humour should 'be still complied with, and the *Supream Providence* by no means cross it! Oh! the vile 'Absurdity, the prophane Impudence of the 'Clay, to prescribe unto the Potter! Who doth 'not know (when he remembers, that he is a '*Creature*) and will not acknowledge, (if he 'be a Christian) that we are not to be Carvers 'for ourselves, but thankfully should accept 'the Portion given us? And, in a Journey to 'the heavenly Kingdom, we should be well 'content, that foul Ways sometimes, as well 'as fair, should fall unto our share. 'Tis brutish, of the worser kind, to stand gently at

'the *Crib*. but fling and throw at the *Yoke*. Shall 'God only *ſtroak*, and never *ſtrike* us? Good *Job*, you hear, doth equally acquieſce in *Good* and *Evil*, from the hand of God. *An Heavenly Temper, this!* And it would be our Honour, as 'tis our Duty, to be like him, and make it ours; eſpecially, ſince we live in Goſpel-days, from whence he was at ſo great a diſtance.

6. Hezekiah.] But we will proceed to the pious Prince *Hezekiah*, him we ſhall find to be very much of this Celeſtial Grain likewiſe, according to that proportion his Afflictions held with thoſe fore-ſpoken of. 'Tis true, he was a great deal ſhort of moſt of them in the point of *ſuffering*, but little inferiour unto any in that of *Submiſſion*. The Almighty ſends him word, and by a faithful Meſſenger, his Prophet *Eſaiah*, *That the days ſhould come, that all in his houſe, and what his fathers had laid up in ſtore, ſhould be carried to Babylon, and nothing left.* Moreover, *that the fruit of his loins, his ſons, ſhould be made captives there, and the vileſt of them Eunuchs*, Chap. 39. 6, 7, 8. Now with this Plundering of his Treaſure, and Enſlaving of his Iſſue, we muſt neceſſarily admit, that a world of other Miſchiefs would be in company, becauſe a vaſt, and forreign, and a barbarous Army was to do the Execution. And 'tis well known, that ſpoyling the Fruits, burning the Houſes, deflouring the Virgins, and murthering the Subjects, with other horrid Villanies, are the Effects of War, and the Delights

lights of bloody Enemies. Now it is plain, that this Divine Threat was pregnant with a numerous train of frightful Evils; altho' any ſingle one of them might have made work enough for the beſt of Men to have grappled with. How then doth *Hezekiah* acquit himſelf upon the Tydings? Doth he exclaim of God, and cry out of his unequal Dealing with him? Bad Men will do ſo upon far leſs, and truly none, occaſion; and put the Almighty (in his own Vindication) to make the Blow recoil upon themſelves: *Are not my ways equal? Are not your ways unequal:* Ezek. 18. 25, 29. But here was not one word, no, not a thought, to caſt an ill Reflection upon God: You ſhall hear him avow the contrary; and inſtead of an Accuſation of him for the Meſſage, give a ſingular Approbation to it, *Good* (ſaith he to the Meſſenger, not *bad,*) *is the word of the Lord, which thou haſt ſpoken,* Ezek. 39. 8. notwithſtanding all the Terrour contained in it. A graceleſs Wretch will be apt to cavil thus: If this be *good,* then what is *bad?* But a godly Soul concludeth juſtly, that nothing but *good* can poſſibly come from Goodneſs itſelf. And ſuch is God, *being good to all:* but *unto them that love him, making all to work for good.* Thus was this *good King* affected; and we ſhould Copy his Example out unto ourſelves.

7. *Our Bleſſed* SAVIOUR.] But what ſhall we ſay to our *Bleſſed Lord?* He cometh next to be conſidered, according to that Order we

have purſued hitherto, and at the firſt propoſed. If the *Members* have done excellently, the *Head* will certainly ſurpaſs them all! He taught, and liv'd this heavenly Leſſon of *Silence* and *Submiſſion* unto GOD, in his whole courſe on Earth. It were beſide my Purpoſe, to inſiſt upon his conſtant Doctrine, in the very worſt Diſtreſſes, *To poſſeſs our ſouls in patience*, Luke 21. 19. And for his Practice, there is no occaſion to be large on that, neither: 'tis ſo well known to every Perſon that is but ordinarily verſed in the Holy Goſpel. His Sufferings, out of all doubt, conſidered with all the Circumſtances appertaining thereunto, are not to be paralell'd by any Inſtance that the Earth could ever afford. When we remember how *great* and *good* he was; what meaſure, tho', was meeted out unto him, and with what Contentment all that was *bad*, and the very *worſt*, was put up by him; it muſt amaze us! He was the GOD, that made, preſerved, and rules the World; and will moſt certainly be its Judge at laſt. He took our Nature, and came among us; not to condemn us, or accuſe us, or to do any hurt at all unto us; but the greateſt good, (tho' we deſerv'd worſt Uſage at his hands,) *viz.* to be *the Author of eternal Salvation to us*. Yet was he undervalu'd, reviled, and abuſed, at as bad a rate as it was poſſible for the ſpite of Earth and Hell to do it: He is ſeized on as a *Malefactor*, when moſt innocent, and the greateſt *Benefactor* the World

World ever had; impriſoned, ſpit on, buffetted, ſcourged, and crucified, as one of the worſt and vileſt of Offenders. But with what a calm and quiet Spirit doth he take it all? The Prophet *Eſay* foretold his meek and patient Temper long before his Incarnation, ſaying, *He was oppreſſed, and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter; and as a ſheep before his ſhearer is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth*, Eſ. 53. 7. We all know the quietneſs of thoſe harmleſs, and moſt uſeful Creatures, under the Butcher's hand and knife. Alas! with how much eaſe could the Lord Jeſus have frown'd his Enemies Bodies to the Grave, and their Souls to Hell: or Both at once unto the place of everlaſting Torments? And it had been ſurely done; but that his Lamb-like Soul abhorr'd, *Vile Mortals ſweet revenge*. He alſo knew it was his Father's Will, that *the Juſt ſhould ſuffer for the Unjuſt*, 1 Pet. 3. 18; and *from* them too: and unto him he thus ſubmits himſelf; *Not my Will, but thine be done*, Luke 22. 42. He will not chuſe for himſelf: but takes with great content, what God is pleas'd to carve unto him. Nay, when his ſervant *Peter* would by a valiant and a righteous Force have reſcued him; he bids him hold his hand; and for this reaſon; It was his Father's pleaſure, that he ſhould thus ſuffer, and he ought not hinder his moſt ready compliance with it: *The Cup which my Father hath given me, ſhall I not drink*

it? John 18. 11. Thus hath our Saviour walk'd before us, breaking the Ice, and paving the Way unto us; that we, with less regret, and greater ease might go after him. This is St. *Peter*'s observation: *Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps. Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatned not: but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously,* 1 Per. 2. 21, 23. And if *we abide in Christ*; in this his *Patience*, as well as other Vertues, *we ought to walk, as he walked,* 1 John 2. 6.

8. *Paul.* To conclude *Examples:* The Holy Apostle *Paul* was an ingenious Scholar, and very apt Disciple to his most excellent Master and Instructer, the ever Blessed Jesus. Pray mark how he had conn'd his Lesson, and gotten it perfectly by heart too, by his own profession: *I have* * *learned* (saith he) *in whatsoever estate I am, therewith to be contented*, Phil. 4. 11. In Health, and Plenty; in Peace and Liberty, this is no difficult Lesson, all Men know. But in the case of Sickness, Poverty; loss of Friends, Estate, of Liberty; or in the danger of Life: how many then will quickly cry out, *This is an hard saying: who can bear it?* I answer them: *Such a one as* Paul *can do it.* And further; he that *hath been taught of God, and hath learned the truth, as it is in Jesus:* even He can do it also. If all the World should frown upon

* 'Tis a work of Learning, and Exercise, and Care. *S. Chrys. in loc.*

upon them; if Midnight-Darkneſs hide all Comforts from them; if neither *Sun, nor Moon, nor Stars appear* unto them; yet theſe People are able to retire within themſelves; or rather, *run into the Name of the Lord*; and All is well. For *the Name of the Lord is a ſtrong Tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is ſafe*; ſaith *Solomon*, Prov. 18. 10. This alſo made the holy Apoſtle ſay; *He could do all things, through Chriſt that ſtrengthen'd him*, Phil. 4 13. And the Context ſheweth, that this *Doing* chiefly reſpecteth *Suffering*. Wherein Chriſt's Preſence with the Soul converts Complaints into Thankſgivings, and Repinings to Rejoycings. The Church of old makes a clear Proof of this: *Altho the Fig-tree ſhall not bloſſom, neither ſhall fruit be in the Vine; the labour of the Olive ſhall fail, and the Field ſhall yield no meat; the Flock ſhall be cut off from the Fold, and there ſhall be no Herd in the Stall: Yet I will Rejoyce in the Lord, I will Joy in the God of my Salvation*, Habak. 13, 18. And how are Murmuring, and Impatience ſent into Exile then; never to take harbour in ſuch Breaſts, as theſe? Well, now we know, how quiet, and at what hearts eaſe, the holy Apoſtle was in in the worſt condition. *He was content!* And what are Any, or the very Beſt of us, that in our Sufferings we ſhould not bring our Minds to that Sedateneſs, wherein his was, who was ſo much *Above us?* The plain reaſon is: Becauſe, in Grace, we are ſo much *Beneath him.*

Re-

Recapitulation.] Now, looking back upon this Cloud of Witnesses, we must acknowledge; that they all conspire to ring it loudly in our ears: *Let Patience have its perfect Work* within you, whatever Distresses lye upon you. If we are Real Christians, to be Meek with *Moses*; to hold our Peace with *Aaron*; leave God to himself with *Eli*; possess our thoughts with our own approaching End, as *David* did; to bless God's Name for our Adversity, as well for Prosperity, after *Job*'s example; approve his Methods, altho severe, in a compliance with *Hezekiah*; submit our Wills entirely unto his; as was *our Saviour*'s holy Practice: and lastly, to learn with the great Apostle of the Gentiles; *in all estates to be contented.* If God see meet to take away Estate, to be content; if Name, content; if Health, content; if Liberty, Friends, or Children, nay, Father, Husband, or Wife, dear to us as our selves; yea, or life it self; *to be Contented still.* Whatever Distress the gracious Providence shall bring us to, it is our Duty, after the Examples of all these Famous Worthies (Christ Jesus Soldiers) and the Captain of their and our Salvation himself; to learn the Doctrine of my Text: *To be dumb, and open not our mouth; and that, because God doth it.*

And so much of the Examples.

II. *Ar-*

II. *Arguments.*] Now for *Powerful Arguments*, which will evince the necessary Obligations that Pious People do lye under, to bear Afflictions without Impatience, and a Quiet Mind. There are but five I shall make use of: but that which bringeth up the Rear, if I may not say, 'twill prove a *Mother of Nations*; at least, 'twill shew, it hath a Teeming Womb, and bring us forth a double Number to the whole Tale mention'd.

They are these in brief: 1. Hereby they are conformed to the Best of Saints, and in their Best Condition, on the Earth. 2. The first and second Birth do *Both* dispose to Troubles. 3. Impatience is so far from helping then, that it doth more hurt. 4. There is Undoubted Good unto the Godly at the Bottom of all they suffer. And 5ly; *'Tis the Lord that sendeth their Distresses to them.*

Arg. 1. Good Christians should bear with Patience their Distresses; because *They but conform them to the best of Saints, and in their Best Condition upon Earth.* Then why such sore Complaints among them? Had there been *formerly* no famous Instances given to this Purpose; who, that hath only tasted Holy Scriptures can be ignorant; that * *Patriarchs, Prophets*, and *Apostles*, had *Generally* this Measure meted out unto

* *In origine status mundi Abel a fratre occiditur, Jacob fugatur, Joseph venundatur, & David Saul persequitur*, &c. S. Cypr. de Exhort. Mort. cap. 11.

unto them; nay, *prest down, shaken together, and running over*; especially to the *Last*; and I may say, the *Best* of them, our Lord's most dear Disciples? 'Tis certain that St. *Paul* saith; not barely, that *They were appointed to afflictions*, 1 *Thess.* 3. 3; but that he thought, *God had set Them forth as Men appointed to death it self: for they were made*, in their Sufferings, *a Spectacle to the World* (the upper and the lower) *of Angels, and Men too*, 1 Cor. 4. 9. And should it now be accounted a grievous matter for the Successors to be like their Predecessors? What? Are we better than they? Alas! How much beneath them? Whose Modesty will not prompt him freely to confess himself far shorter of them in real worth, than he is in time behind them? And, pray now; do we not all desire to be Partakers with them, in point of Profit; and shall we grudge our share of Pains? Would we arrive at the blessed Harbour where they are driving an heavenly Trade; and yet refuse to cross the swelling Waves after them? Is it fit and equal, that we should settle in their *Canaan*, without the Troubles and the Dangers of that *Wilderness*, which they have pass'd, and is the strait way to it? If we have hopes to be such as They in Heaven, it must not be grudg'd, if we be like them on the Earth. How proper is it, that a Similitude should be betwixt the *Fellow-members*? And how much more, with the *Head* it self? Is it not written, *Heb.* 2. 10. *That the Captain*

of

of our salvation was made perfect thro' sufferings? He put not on his *Crown*, but going from the *Cross*: nor sat he on the *Throne*, before he had hung upon the *Tree*. And shall it be thought intollerable, or any thing hard; to follow *such a Leader? And unto such a Journey's End?*

But, as I said before, Saints suffering State was *best* unto them: even so it is. The *Riddle* was of old; that the *Eater affords meat, and the strong sweetness*. Judg. 14. 14. And truly, good Men's *sorrows* on Earth bring *solace* down from Heaven unto them. When the Knife was putting to *Isaac*'s Throat by the sad Father; an Angel comes and puts a Ram into his room, unto his greater joy, *Gen.* 22. 14. *As a father pitieth his children; so the Lord doth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembreth that we are but dust.* Parents are wont to be most tender to their weak, and sickly Ones: others can make a better shift. And shall not he that puts these Bowels into them towards theirs, have them much more within himself to His? What tho' a Mother *Should forget her sucking babe*; Esa. 49. 15. (and such, a Worse-thing-than-a-Brute, is found sometimes in Humane shape) *God will not, cannot do so.* We read, that suffering Saints are said to *Glory in tribulations.* And *Glorying is* no sign of *Grieving* and *Repining.* How should impatient Lamentations be able then to keep their Ground; *When light afflictions, and for a moment, work a far more exceeding and external weight of glory?*

This

This is the 1st Argument. And the 2d will prove like unto it.

Arg. 2. Distresses should not raise great Storms, and Tempests in the pious Soul; because our *First, and second Birth do, both, dispose us to them.* As we are *Men*, and *Christians*, they are the Lot appointed for us. And ought we not; and *therefore*, to be quiet under them? How great's the Folly; to be so disturbed, at what is not to be avoided? *Man*, now, *is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward*; as we heard, *at first*, was spoken by Holy *Job*. And all Men know; neither Art, nor Force can make the Flames descend; but they are always mounting upward. That is the Nature of them. Wherefore to be Impatient under Trouble is to be quarreling with the Almighty Majesty, by whom a Humane Body and a Rational Soul is bestowed on us. And so there is Ingratitude, and Rebellion link'd together. Thus to requite him, that brought them out of nothing by meer Bounty; and by the same, hath made them capable of injoying all things, and the best of all; *His blessed self for ever:* if they will be ruled by him.

And for the *second Birth:* it commonly hath the throws, and pangs of a travelling Woman: and, often, worser far. General Experience makes a proof of this. However, in growing up unto Maturity there is no escaping of Adversity: *Through much tribulation* (saith St. *Paul*) *we must enter the kingdom of God. We must:* 'tis neces-

necessarily, and unavoidably so. Heaven is on high: and it is hard to climb an Hill; a steep, and long one, especially. The Lungs will labour; Feet will faulter; and Bones will ake, in doing it. Were there no Difficulty in our way to Glory, and we met no Troubles in our Travel thither, we might indeed be *called*, and *accounted* Christians: but how we should be really so; I mean, *Legitimate Children* unto God, is hard to manifest, and may very well be doubted, from the holy Apostle's words, who saith; *Heb.* 12. 5, 6, 7, &c. *My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chastneth; and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth: If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom his father chastneth not? But if ye are* without chastisement, *whereof* all *are partakers, then are you* bastards, *and not sons.* Let now a distressed Christian seriously ponder this; and let him *not stagger through Unbelief*; and 'tis not possible for Discontent to keep its post any longer in his Heart. Let him be *strong in Faith*, and this will turn his Crosses into Crowns; and make what's bitter to the outward, relish sweetly to the inward Man. Now if ever, the Apostle's words will be certainly verified with the upright, tho' afflicted, Person: *We faint not, but tho' our outward man* should *perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day*, 2 Cor. 4. 16. *Earth's Darlings*, and who have *their portion only in this life*, cannot avoid

void a world of Miseries: and shall *Heaven's Off-spring* be disorder'd at abiding what both Grace and Nature hath prepared for them? Especially, since Truth it self hath plainly told them, That their Affliction is but a certain Token of God's Affection.

Now, surely; there is no reason for *Repining*, but occasion rather of *Rejoycing*.

Arg. 3. *Impatience is so far from doing service to us in our Sufferings, that it makes our Case a great deal worser than it was before; and bringeth many, and very evil Inconveniences with it.* Imagine, that under a sore Distress we should make hoarse our throat with crys, and drown our bed with tears, and crack our brain with cares, and break our heart with sighs and groans: what would the Upshot be of all this pitiful Passion? Would such a Course, so void of Reason and Religion, prove an effectual Relief unto us? Would the loss of Livelihood be hereby repaired? A bodily Sickness be recovered? The Life of a deceased Friend again restored? Or any Calamity, whatever, be removed; or so much as eased? Alas! poor silly Creatures as we are! what do we else by such a Procedure, but plainly imitate the folly of the *Fly*, when 'tis intangled in the Spider's Web: She makes a Noise, and is greatly Fluttering; and hampers herself *thereby* the faster in that Net; and becomes a sooner

Impatientes non efficiunt ut a malis eruantur, sed ut mala gravia patiantur. S. Aug. de Patient. cap. 2.

ſooner Prey to him that ſpread it. Methinks we are reſembled fitly by the corded Beaſt whoſe head the Axe, and heart the Butcher's Knife hath ſtruck; which, the more it ſtruggles, *ſilly Wretch*, the faſter letteth out its lood, and life therewith together. Such is the natural Iſſue of Mens Impatience: *They look for peace, and there is no good; for a time of healing, and behold trouble.* The Benefit, which they promiſe, proves a Dammage to them. Undoubtedly, a manifold Miſchief flows from hence, How can the Offices of Love and Service be diſcharged, as they ought to be, unto Relations, by a Mind diſordered, and unhing'd by this Diſtemper? Expect, as ſoon, a Man that hath a Palſie, or is Bedrid, ſhould fetch you Food, or make your Fire. Beſide, it ſo affects the *Body*, that ſometimes Death itſelf is quickly call'd unto it: always the Seeds thereof, in lingring Sickneſſes, are deeply rooted in it. And how untuned the *Soul* muſt neceſſarily be, and bar'd its actiag with ſpiritual life, and vigour, is very eaſily underſtood: The griefs, and cares, and fears are apt to uſher in Deſpair; but certainly drive out Faith, and Hope, and Love. To conclude, he that is thus captivated, cannot be capable to pay due Homage to his God. How ſhould he, as becomes him, fear his *Threats*, obey his *Precepts*, truſt in his *Promiſes*, and rejoyce before him with *Thankſgiving?* I will ſay but this: Impatience, and Murmuring under the Hand of

God is a great Affront unto his blessed Majesty; and cannot be well taken by him. Nay, he hath often set the Marks of his Displeasure on it. I will pass by that which * *Moses* once and again hath recorded thereof: remembring you only of the Apostle's Caution to the *Corinthians*, *Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer*, 1 Cor. 10. 10. We may conclude of this (wherewith I close the Argument): If we belong to God, and are dissatisfied at his Dealings with us, we lay a kind of force upon him: *Either to keep us longer in his Furnace, or to remove us thence with our Dross upon us.* And surely the Choice is not the best, on either side. Wherefore we must rebuke Impatience: and the rather, for that——

* Exod. 16, 7, 8, &c. Numb. 14. 27, &c.

Arg. 4. There is undoubted Good at the bottom of all Afflictions to the truly Godly. Then, what pretence for Discontentment under them? Had they their rise from an Heart replete with Vengeance, Rage, and Fury towards us; and were they the Blows of a bloody Enemy, that aim'd at nothing less than our utter ruine; our Case were then so sad, that 'twould be hard to find out Comfort for us; and seem unequal, to condemn a turbulent Carriage in Distresses. But, blessed be GOD, things go at quite another rate: The Cloud that is *Darkness unto Egypt, is Light to Israel*, Exod. 14. 20. The Devil and his Angels, who may

may be Executioners to the righteous and good Providence in our Sufferings, are none otherwise than most malignantly disaffected to God's People. Yet, how bloodily soever they are bent; and whatsoever Mischief they are permitted to effect: that which happens, is not what their Malice doth design, but what God's Mercy doth direct. The Axe never heweth; but when, and as, the Carpenter strikes therewith. And the sharpest Sword will fetch no Blood, but from the Hand that wields, and smiteth with it. But Men, and evil Spirits too, are *Tools*, which God, (as far as it is pleasing to him) maketh use of: And he lays them by again, as he thinks good; and *then* they must be quiet in spite of all their Cruelty. The Condition of holy * *Job* doth make this evident. And both the Psalmist, and the Prophet *Esay*, plainly declare as much. So that who, or whatever brings a Calamity to us; we must conclude, 'tis sent of God for good. And, if we wisely attend our Duty, 'twill be with us, as with ‖ *Themistocles*, *Better in our trouble, than without it.* This is not peradventure, presently, perceived by us, in every Tryal. Nor do the Sick, or Wounded, at the first or second, or (may be) many applications of the most proper and

* Chap. 1, & 2. Ps. 17. 13, 14. Es. 10. 5, 6, 7, 15.

‖ He in his Excile living in greater state then his own Country could afford; said to his Servants, *Sirs, We had been Undone, if we had not been Undone.* Plut. Them.

soveraign Medecines to them, forthwith receive a Cure, or find Ease thereon. However, 'tis better with them; because they are in the ready way thereto. And is it not egregious Folly to exclaim against, or have hard thoughts of, either Doctor or Surgeon, for a griping Belly, or a smarting Leg, when 'tis to save the Life, and to recover Health? Should Sufferers be so far from benefit in their Troubles, that they do not yet so much as understand the meaning of them: why, they should know that the Golden Oar is cover'd with coarser Earth; and it will ask both pains and patience to dig deep enough to reach it. And our blessed Saviour's words to his Servant *Peter*, are very applicable here: *What I do, thou knowest not yet; but shalt know hereafter*, Joh. 13. 7. Wait then with quietness; and thou wilt sooner find the Treasure. But if thou quarrel with thy Medicines, and storm at him that doth apply them, it must be longer, if e'er, thou get a Cure; when a submissive Spirit will soon be healed. God must be met, in his own way. As he || comes not in a *great strong Wind*; *nor in the* frightful *Earthquake*; *nor in the* furious *Fire: but in the still small Voice:* we must attend him also with a still and quiet Spirit. Turbulent Passions in the Soul, are like loud Noises, and deafning Clamours at the Ears. These marr the Hearing, and so the Understanding. Hence 'tis, that in such a *Lurry* we cannot *hear the Rod*,

|| 1 Kings 19. 11.

Rod, and who hath appointed it, Mic. 6. 9; ſo as to underſtand, and receive, the good God means us by it. Yet good is ſurely meant thereby. What prudent Father ever did correct his Child, but for his benefit? And how ſhould Infinite Wiſdom, with equal Love, have any other Aim? Afflictions are God's *File*, to rub off the ruſt of Sin that it may not rot our Souls. His *Fan*, to ſcatter far away the Duſt and Chaff, which are apt to bury our Grain in Uſeleſneſs. Yea, and his *Furnace* too, where the Droſs and Tin is ſever'd, that the Mettal may be pure and bright. Are not all theſe for greateſt good? But the Apoſtle is expreſs, in ſaying, That tho' ſome *men correct for pleaſure; God chaſtens us for our profit*, Heb. 12. 10. And the Pſalmiſt had the proof upon himſelf, for he profeſſeth, Pſal. 119. 71. *'Twas good for him that he was afflicted.* For *he was gone aſtray before that met him, and brought him back to God.* And how far he might have wander'd, to the utter loſing of his Way; had not his wild Carreer been ſtopt by the Rod of God, who can tell? Certain 'tis, that long Proſperity is a Bait to all Impiety; and no Affliction oft-times proves the very worſt Affliction: Yea, and Impunity the greateſt Puniſhment. Therefore God threatned, in his high Diſpleaſure, *Not to puniſh the daughters, nor the wives in Iſrael for their whoredoms; to ſtrike Judah no more:* and *let Ephraim alone in his idolatry.* When

Hoſea 4. 14.
Eſay 1. 5.
Hoſea 4. 17.

Providence smiting of a Pious Man with Lameness onely, designs preventing his running away from God: or with Bodily Sickness, 'tis for preserving his Soul in, or recovering it to, Health. Such Mens Losses of Temporal Riches, are for securing Eternal to them: and Death's removal of their Earthly Friends, is for renewing, and faster setling their Friendship with the Heavenly Majesty. Nay, and their own approaching End serves for preparing them unto an Endless Bliss.

And where's the Cause now of Complaining? How great's the reason, rather, of Rejoycing: at least, of Silence, and Submission? Especially, when the 5th and last Argument shall be considered.

Arg. 5. *Thou, Lord, didst it.* And this is what the Royal Psalmist urgeth in my Text. Which only (tho our Proverb aptly saith, *Store's no Sore*) in mine opinion, might be sufficient to give repose and quiet to a sincere Christian in his greatest troubles; suppose it be considered in its just extent. Should I pronounce it like the *Tower of* David, *builded for an Armory, wherein there hung a thousand Bucklers, all Shields of mighty Men*; it were not spoken much amiss. I'm sure 'tis no Hyperbole, instead of calling it a single Argument, to say an Heap of those are lodg'd therein. For with a little Patience you shall see it bringing forth at least One Decade of them. Only 'tis requisite, that we should retrieve our former thoughts

thoughts upon the words, and with this short Improvement. *Thou, Lord, didst it*; seemeth to make the holy Prophet after this manner to address himself to God: 'O *Lord, I still'd my Soul, and stopt my Mouth under my doleful Case*; 'because *no Luck, or Chance without me, none Evil* 'Accident *on me, none Inadvertency or Presump-* 'tion *in me*; *no Lusts of Men, or Rage of Devils* 'against *me, was the Prime Cause of my Calami-* 'ty. *Whatsoever Mischief mine Enemies, or my* 'sinful *Self, might be instrumental in unto me*; 'twas *only as thy Justice, and thy Goodness gave* 'Commission, *or Permission thereunto. Whence,* 'mine *Impatience were nothing else but Quarelling* 'at *thy Providence.* Therefore was I silent, both as to Words and Thoughts too: Because *Thou, Lord, didst it.*

1. Now the First-Born of this Argument shews it thus: *Thou, Lord, didst it*: Thou, whose we are, All, and Every of us: the very Work of thine own Hands. *We are the Clay, and thou our Potter*, Esay 64. 8. And who can justly take offence at thee, *for doing as thou pleasest with thine own?* Mat. 20. 15. If the Potter make one Vessel of finer Earth than he doth another: and appointeth *this* for the common service of the Kitchin, when *that* is to be set up in the Closet; where is the reason to complain? Nay, if one, or more, or many of them be broken into Potsherds by him; is he not without

Ye are not your own, 1 Cor. 6. 19. *We are the Lords*, Rom. 14. 8.

controul for that? Altho *Himself* be not; yet *They* are his own, But we are *much more* God's: to be dealt with by him, as it seemeth good unto him. So, if the Husbandman will put one Parcel of his Sheep into rich Pastures, when the rest can hardly live upon the barren Common: and fatten some of his working Cattel with Food and Rest, for Weeks and Months together; whilst constant Labour and coarser Provender make others leaner than a Rake (as we say): who shall call him to account for this? Are they not his own? But we have no such property in what is called *Ours:* as the Almighty hath in *us.* In truth, we are but *Stewards:* He *Absolute Lord.* We are, All; the Highest in the World, responsible unto God: but God to None. Then at what rate soever it pleaseth him to deal with us; tho he afflict us sorely in our Person, Relations, or Estate; our Duty is to say, *We must be dumb, because thou, Lord, didst it.*

2. *Thou, Lord, didst it.* Who canst do whatsoever thou wilt do; and none can hinder thee. Thy whole pleasure shall be effected *in Heaven, and Earth, the Seas, and all deep places; nor is there any thing too hard for thee,* Psal. 135. 6. And, Lord, if thou sendest one Affliction on me; it might have been an hundred. Hast thou withdrawn one choicest Mercy; why is there any left? Say, that the comfort of our Life were gone: why hath not our Life

Gen. 18. 14. *Is any thing too hard for God?*

Life it ſelf taken wing, and flown away together with it? Should we ſay, *Nay*; would that have prevented it? Or was there Power enough, or Craft at leaſt, with us, to have put a Bar to? Who is ſo great a Fool, as to entertain ſuch Thoughts? Let God once ſpeak the word; 'tis inſtantly done, *Ezek.* 12. 25. If he command Eſtate, or Health, or Liberty, or Friends away; if he *require our Soul:* can we compel, perſwade, or intreat the longer ſtay of any of them? Admit it then, that it may go hard with us in *ſome* reſpects: why is it better; wherefore not bad, or at the very worſt, in *all?* He that hath only given a gentle laſh upon our Hand, could have cut off our Head; or ſtabb'd us at the Heart; if that had been his mind. How eaſie were it for Almighty Power ſo to do? And is not God thus furniſhed? Wherefore, well might the holy Pſalmiſt ſay in his diſtreſs, and the very beſt of us ſay after him upon the like occaſion; *I was dumb, I open'd not my mouth; becauſe thou, Lord, didſt it.*

3. *Thou, Lord, didſt it.* Thou haſt ſeen it meet to take (ſuppoſe) One Mercy from us: but yet haſt left us Many: Nay, haſt beſtowed Hundreds, Thouſands on us! For *thy compaſſions never fail; but are new every morning*, Lam. 3. 23. And *thou doſt Encompaſs them, that truly truſt in thee, with mercy*, Pſal. 32. 10. When we, with grief *remember*, what a Bleſſing we have loſt; ſhall we *forget* the while thoſe many

others

others which we still injoy? What Favours, much above all reckoning, dost thou, O Lord, afford, for Soul and Body too? Unto our selves and Friends likewise? If we be real Christians, we then must be Disciples to the Psalmist; and say our Lesson that he teacheth; *How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God? How great is the sum of them? If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand*, Psal. 139. 17, 18. That only one, which is worth ten thousand others; the Gift of thy blessed Son, *to die for our offences, rise for our justification, and at thy right-hand to live, for making intercession for us*; that we may have Pardon, Pity; Support and Comfort under all our Pressures; What an Invaluable Mercy is it! We have God's sure Promise, That *he will never leave, nor forsake his People*, Heb. 13. 5. till he hath brought them through the Wilderness of this World in safety to the heavenly *Canaan*. God gave his Son unto this very purpose. And as *Joshua*, who was the Type of Jesus, led the Carnal *Israel* into the Promised Land *Below*; so *Jesus*, by him typified, will certainly conduct the Spiritual *Israel* into that *Above*. Oh, Ravishing Blessing! And the very Quintessence of all Blessings! Able to make a Pious Soul *Rejoyce* in spite of Sorrow; and to triumph in its Tribulations. To be sure; it will, and must have influence on him in his Sufferings, to say with *David*; *Lord, I am dumb: because thou didst it.*

4. *Thou,*

4. *Thou, Lord, didst it.* Who, notwithstanding, hast made it better with us; much better, than with many others, much our betters. Imagine some of us have lost a fair Estate: there are those good People who, with their Estate, have lost their Health too. Say, thou art sick: why such a Friend, or Neighbour, or Acquaintance at the least, is sick and lame withal: and some (poor Souls) with Poverty into the bargain. Admit, that thou hast parted with One dear Relation: Many are they, that have lost Many such; and some All. If Death hath snatch'd away one Child from thee: there are those that have none left them now, tho time was, they had many. Hath the Just Providence removed an Affectionate Mother from thee? There are not a few whom it hath bereaved of such a Father. And several that it hath made Orphans; destitute both of Father, and of Mother too. If a Good Man's *Help-meet* be gone: there are Pious Women that have had their *Head* taken from them. Whoever thou art that truly feareſt God, and art too much complaining of thy Infelicity, be but perſwaded to leave off poring only on thy ſelf, and look abroad a little; and thou ſhalt find, Thou haſt the *light ſide of the Cloud*, when many others muſt be contented *with the dark*. Remember that moſt excellent Perſon, who ſtandeth upon Scripture-Record with this moſt ſad Complaint of his to God, *Lover, and friend haſt*

thou

thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkneſs, Pſal. 88. 18: and ſurely then upon the whole, thou muſt acknowledge, that thou oughteſt to ſay; I will ſay nothing: *becauſe thou, Lord, didſt it.*

---Similes aliorum reſpice Caſus, Mitius iſta feres. Ovid. Met 15. 8.

5. *Thou, Lord, didſt it.* Thou, who art abundantly able to ſupply my greateſt Wants; ſupport me under my heavieſt Loads; repair me for my greateſt Loſſes. *Is any thing too hard for God, with whom all things are poſſible*, Gen. 18. 14. Matth. 19. 26. I grant; were any one's Neceſſities unrelievable; his Burdens inſupportable; or his Damages irrepairable; the Caſe of ſuch a Perſon were very lamentable! But good and wiſe Chriſtians do *All* know better things. And to the Upright Man; that God, who is his *Conſtant Hope*, both *Can*, and *Will*, moſt certainly prove his *Effectual Help*. Is it not promiſed; *My God ſhall ſupply all your Need according to his Riches?* Phil. 4. 19. And we are aſſured of his *Sufficiency* in the laſt words, as of his *Good-will* in thoſe foregoing. And how punctually was it made good to holy *Job* after all his long and diſmal Sufferings: *when his latter end was better than his beginning?* Job 42. 12. All was made good *in kind* to him, that had before been taken from him. And the *Lord's Hand is not ſhortned now*, nor *his Heart hardned*, neither: but, if that be beſt, he can, and will do ſo again, to ſuf-

suffering Saints of the present Age also. Had *Job*'s Condition never to have been match'd in future Times, wherefore should the holy Apostle *James*, *Jam.* 5. 11. direct our eyes point blank on this Example for our encouragement in Afflictions? But so, you know, he doth. However, God will never fail to make up every Loss unto his faithful Servants, *in value*, where 'tis not fit it should be done *in kind*. Himself, if all be gone besides, will be, and is his People's *Portion*. And is not this enough, and infinitely the better Share! Who that's afflicted but must say: *I am dumb*; because *thou, Lord, didst it?*

Psalm 73. 26. Lamen. 3. 24. 2 Cor. 12. 9.

6. *Thou, Lord, didst it.* Thou took'st away my dearest Relations (whether Husband, Wife, Father, Mother, Child, or Friend) whom (blessed be thy Name) thou tookest into Covenant with thyself before. (And for this once, I will be limitted thus.) I am bereaved, Lord; and 'tis thy righteous doing too. But oh! what better provision hast thou made for him, or them, than I could ever possibly do, had they staid with me? Mine is the *loss*, 'tis true; but theirs the *infinite gain!* For, what is Earth to Heaven! What is a Husband, Wife; a Father, Mother; a Child, or Friend, to God? Now we are sure, that those, who live a while *to Him below*, shall live *with Him above* for ever.

Cum charissimos diligimus de seculo exeunt, gaudendum potius quam dolendum. S. Cyprian. de Mort.

ever. And are we so much afflicted for parting with them? Where is the love then, that we think we bear them? Are not ourselves the proper Object of it; and its utmost Term? No doubt it is Nicknam'd-kindness, that would have them leave the Church Triumphant for the Militant. What? would you have them pay back their Wages; come down, and do their Work once over more? Now they have won the Field, and are dividing the Spoil, to have them run the hazard of another Battle, is certainly very far from real Friendship: is great Unkindness. It can't be Love; to desire Men gotten safe into their Port, and with so rich a Cargo, should be thrust out afresh into a Sea, most dangerous, and tempestuous. *Is this our Kindness to our Friends?* In short, for them to be with us again, were to exchange their ravishing, unspeakable, and eternal Joys and Bliss, for Cares, and Fears, and Pains, and Sorrows, and Sins, once more. *These* now the Almighty Mercy hath freed them from for ever: *Those* it hath fixed them in eternally. Canst find in thy heart to grudge that admirable Kindness God hath shewed them? Must thou not readily speak it: I am dumb; *because thou, Lord, didst it?*

7. *Thou*, &c. Thou, at whose hands we have deserved abundantly worse, than ever yet we have received. Well may we say with the holy Prophet, how bad soever it fareth with us: *He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor reward-*

rewarded us according to our iniquities. Pſal. 103. 10. Nay, the good Man *Ezra*'s acknowledgment would be ours alſo: *Our God hath puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve.* Chap. 9. 13. He that complains for wanting of the *ſtaff of Bread*, may give God thanks that the *Bread of Life* is not taken from him: for long ago, and too too often he made a forfeiture of his Right unto that greateſt Mercy. He that bemoans his Lameneſs, Pains and bodily Sickneſs, is Debtor to meer Grace, that he is not under the tormenting Terrors of Soul, and the Rack of a wounded Spirit: his Sins having amply merited that, and a great while ſince. He that lamenteth a dear Friend's being gone to Heaven, and leaving him behind on Earth; moſt juſtly may admire the Divine Goodneſs that his own Tranſgreſſions had not a great while ſince tumbled his own Body into the Grave, and his Soul to Hell. It is a ſtinging Queſtion, and ſmartly rebukes the querulous Chriſtian, which is put by the Prophet *Jeremiah*; he asks, *Wherefore doth a living man complain? A man for the puniſhment of his ſins?* Lam. 3. 39. We are the Fools, that make the Rod, for our own back; and may well enough be ſaid to lay it on too: for we procure the doing of it. But *why do we complain*; and yet the Grave hath not ſwallowed us up? Whilſt there is life (we ſay) there's hope. And ſo there is: Hope of a Peace with God; hope of Judgment's being removed; hope of a latter End proving better

ter than the Beginning. *Why then doth a living man complain?* But for a *Saint*, that is yet alive, and shall live with God for ever; *Content must conquer his Complaint, and Triumph over it.* Thanks be to God, that pays us not in our own Coin. We rob him often of that Faith, and Hope, and Love; that Praise, Obedience, and Submission, due to him upon infinite Obligations. And shall we murmur, when he takes but a little from us; and nothing but his own; and lent us meerly; and only till he calls for it again; as all our Comforts are? Surely, for very shame, in every trouble that happens to us, we humbly should confess to God, that as our Duty is, *We will be dumb*; because *thou, Lord, didst it.*

8. *Thou*, &c. Thou, that meanest us no hurt at all in any, thy severest Providences towards us. This Lesson may seem hard, 'tis true. But *if we can believe* (as our Saviour said) *all things then are possible*, Mark 9. 23. And this is very far from being improbable. The Ulcer is not lanced; no, nor the Limb cut off; with a design to destroy the Patient: but to save his Life. When holy *David* had been sorely toss'd by a violent Tempest in his Thoughts, about the Prosperity of the Wicked, and Adversity of the Righteous, he happily weathers the Point at last; and as a Man o'er-joy'd thereat, he can't forbear a kind of Triumph (tho' abruptly) for the great conclusion he had gained: *Truly God is good to Israel: even to such as*

are

are of a clean heart, Psal. 73. 1. Tho' he distress them: 'tis not to destroy them. The Surgeon, and the Soldier, both take Blood away: but He, means not to hurt, but heal; This, for no good, but killing, where he smites. When the Almighty's Anger lays home upon the wicked and impenitent; 'tis to make riddance of them; and by a first, to plunge them into the second Death. But Death it self, the worst of Evils, hath *lost its sting*, and doth no hurt to the truly Godly seized by it. Then lesser Evils are less *likely* to be for mischief. But I shall come to *certainty* (altho but breefly, since something near this purpose hath before been spoken:) St. *Paul* declares it on his knowledge, *That all things work together for good to them that love God*, Rom. 8. 28. And Afflictions must be in the Number of *ALL THINGS*. Indeed they cheefly are respected by the Apostle there. And then it cannot be too bold a Speech to say; The *Sender* of them meaneth no hurt to the Pious *Bearer* of them. He is not therefore to forget his Lesson; but keep it still in Mind, and readily speak it with his Mouth: I am dumb: because, *Thou Lord, didst it*.

9. *Thou*, &c. Even Thou, who always usest to deal out Sufferings to thy Servants, in their due, *Weight* and *Measure*. For as thy Bowels do restran thee from administring the bitter Potion, when no bad Discase is either to be removed, or prevented: So when these

Cases happen. and Necessity urgeth the giving of it; the Dose shall certainly bear exact proportion to the dear Patient's strength and case. That *former*; thine Apostle *Peter* doth assure us of, saying; *Now for a season (if need be*; and not otherwise) *ye are in heaviness*, 1 Pet. 1. 7. Blessed be thy Name, Thou dost not as some ill Physitians do: *viz.* make Experiments, and try Practices on them. No; no: *Thou dost not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*, Lament. 3. 33. Much less the Children of God; thine own Regenerate Off-spring. Then for the *Latter*; thy Servant *Paul* doth make us confident; that thy Wise Compassion in thine Administrations doth distinguish betwixt the *Fathers*, *Young Men*, and *Little Children* in thy Family. For he telleth us; *That thou art faithful, and will not suffer us to be tempted above what we are able*, 1 Cor. 27. 8. Here is no prescribing an Equal Quantity (hand over head) to young and old, to weak and strong; as the Blind Quacks are wont to do. *Esay* gave this Evidence long before the Apostles time; when he acknowledgeth unto God touching the troubles of his People; That *in measure, when it shooteth forth he would debate with it*, Esay 27. 8. (whether, and how far agreable to their state and strength) and, if the case required, bate some *drams*, or *scruples*, or *grains* at least: for saith he, *Thou stayest thy rough wind in the day of thine east wind.* Whence it is clear; either their *Burthen* shall be Lighter, or their *Backs* made Stron-

Stronger. And then 'tis no complaining Case, and commands repose and quiet to their Minds: they must be dumb: because *thou, Lord, hast done it.*

10, and lastly; *Thou, Lord, didst it.* Thou, O most Compassionate and Gracious Lord; who shortly, very shortly, wilt put a Final End, an Everlasting Period, to all Distresses of thy Faithful Servants. It is but *yet a little While*; a few Moments longer, and then Adieu, and Farewel for ever; All Cares, and Fears; All Griefs, and Sorrows; All Losses and Disappointments whatsoever. Yea, and Be Gone Eternally, That *Troubler* of God's *Israel*; That *Achan* in the Camp; That *Jonah* in the Ship; Indwelling Sin; whose teeming Womb hath brought forth all our Miseries, and will be ever breeding more: be gone for ever! And welcome, Then, All Joy and Gladness, Exalting and Triumphing in an Holy State of Bliss and Glory, Unspeakable, Inconceivable, and Eternal! *You have need of Patience*, saith the Apostle, *Heb.* 10. 36. And for your help thereto; remember, *'Tis but a little while, and he that will come, shall come, and will not tarry*, Verse 37. What is an harder Service, or Apprentiship, to him that hath but a Month, or Week, or Day for the Expiration of his Term? Who makes a Pother of a frosty Morning's pinching of him; when the Spring's upon us, and Summer at its heels?

Dabit Deus his quoq; finem. Virg.

A Good Man's darkest Night is just at breaking up; not only into a Dawning Light; but a Glorious Sunshine, and a Perpetual Noon. And then all frightful Storms are hush'd by a delightful Calm; and heart-breaking Sorrows turn'd out by ravishing Solace. Who, pray, would grudge a little pains and trouble, to put off, and exchange, his Mourning Weeds for Wedding Robes? And think it much to sweat (perhaps) in laying by an heavy Cross, for taking up an heavenly Crown? This is the true Christian's Business in all the Troubles wherewith he now is exercised. Let him hold out, and labour, but a *Moment* longer, 2 *Cor.* 4. 17; and all his present Misery shall end in Endless Happiness; when the Prosperous Sinner's Sweets shall be swallowed up in Gall and Wormwood; and that for ever. *This is the Lord's doing:* and should *be marvelous in our eyes.* This steels the Heart of a suffering Saint. This blunts the Arrows; and flats the Bullets that light upon him; and makes him stand impenetrable. This *makes him dumb, and open not his mouth in his distresses*; save only, with profound submission and humility, to give God this reason of his silence: *Because thou, Lord, didst it.*

'*Thou*, 1. Whose we are; 2. Who canst 'do what thou pleasest; 3. Who hast left us 'Many, tho' taken One Mercy from us; '4. Who yet makest it better with us than 'with many our Betters; 5. Who art able to

're-

'relieve ſtill, as bad as 'tis; 6. Who provi-
'deſt better for our dear Friend that's gone,
'than, if he had ſtaid with us, we could;
'7. Who juſtly might'ſt have done much wor-
'ſer by us; 8. Who meaneſt no hurt in what
'thou haſt done; 9. Who dealeſt in weight
'and meaſure with thy People in their Suffer-
'ings, always; 10. Who very ſhortly wilt
'put an Everlaſting Period to all their E-
'vils.

And now, I think, my Word's made good: and you have found an Heap of Arguments in the Pſalmiſt's One. Nor is there wanting any of the Number promiſed. Nay, they perform effectually (in mine opinion) what was undertaken for them. However, in this I may be bold, yet with ſufficient modeſty; that from hence, and elſewhere, you have heard abundant Reaſon, For a *Godly Perſon to be ſtill and ſilent, and by no means impatient under God's heavieſt Hand upon him.* Which was the Firſt Task incumbent on me.

II. *Solution of Objections.*] The next Service I am to be engaged in, is to give Solution unto ſome Objections, which may have taken hold on Honeſt Minds againſt this Doctrine. For the paſt Endeavours juſtly may encourage us to conclude, that they have gotten down the Flames; and afford us hopes of thinking, that the Fire is out: yet, commonly, diſtreſſed Souls are fill'd with troubleſom Smoke;

and have thoſe Embers in them ſtill, that *poſſibly* may break out afreſh. And truly Great Afflictions are much like Great Fires; whereof when Induſtry well applied hath check'd the the Fury, yet ſtill there will be Smothering ſome days after, that muſt not be neglected, but taken meet care of. Which makes me willing (what in my power lieth) to extinguiſh every Spark; that the Pious Sufferer may have ſatisfaction unto all his Doubts and Fears; and not without *eſpecial* and *particular* Thoughts, *About his loſs of Dear Relations*; which uſually (above all others) lies moſt heavy on, and ſticks moſt cloſe unto, us. But let us now attend them.

Obj. 1. 'Some, upon hearing of the Premiſes, (it may be) will be ready to ſay: *What? ſhall we then be ſtupid, and ſenſleſs of our Miſery? Muſt the Affections be eradicated; as the Stoicks taught? May we not deeply mourn under our dreadful Evils?*

Anſ. I anſwer to this quarrelſom Cavil: for that's its Name: the paſt Diſcourſe never caſts its Eye that way at all. But Paſſion, when it maſters Reaſon, hurrieth Men from one Extreme unto another, and will not ſuffer the Golden Mean to have their company. The *Holy Scriptures* gives us many Inſtances of the moſt Eminent Saints that have been much affected upon their Loſſes, in point of *Health*, and *Friends*, and ſpecially of the *Word of God* and the *Churches Peace*. 'Tis true, the Lamentations

tations of *Jeremiah* (to look no further) will ſhew us, they have had ſome concernment (tho of a lower ſize) about Eſtate too. But touching Sickneſs; *David* and *Hezekiah*, two Pious Princes, have much complained. As for a Friend's deceaſe, *David and all the People wept at Abner's grave.* A *Brother* was bewailed *by Mary and Martha.* So their Father by *Jacob's Son:* as he had *mourn'd* before for his Son *Joſeph.* The like was done, and with tears alſo, by the *Father of the Faithful* for his Wife *Sarah.* But why ſhould I ſtay on thoſe that were Meer Men, tho truly Pious? the *God-Man, Chriſt Jeſus, Wept* for dead *Lazarus*, John 11. 35. So that 'tis neither *ſinful*, nor *feminine* frailty, to grieve with Tears on juſt occaſion. And the ſubverſion of the Temple and the Synagogue, wherein the Means of Grace, the Word and Ordinances were ſolemnly adminiſtred, is grievouſly lamented by the Church of old in the * Book of *Pſalms.* So that it is not *Mourning ſimply*, is condemned; but the *Manner*, *Meaſure*, or *Duration* thereof, that makes it faulty.

Pſal. 38. 5, 6, 7. Eſay 38. 3.
2 Sam. 3.
John 11. Gen. 50.
Gen. 37.
Gen. 23.
* Pſal. 74. 7, 8.

1. *Manner.*] Touching the firſt; When the the Heart doth ſwell, the Spirit murmur, and the Thoughts repine in an Affliction: 'tis then

bad indeed! As if the *Judge of all the Earth would not do right!* As if *his Ways were not equal!* As if *Iniquity could be found with him!* Hainous and dreadful Guilt! Such Mourning, with Briny Tears, and a Broken Heart, is to be Mourn'd over again.

2. *Measure.*] As to the second: Excess of Grief impairs both Body and Soul too; and puts the whole Man out of frame, to that degree; that he becomes unfit for Duty towards God and Man. And indeed it seems; not only a violating of the sixth Commandment; but near a renouncing Christianity, and turning *Pagan*. Which makes the Apostle bid Christians, *Not to sorrow as those that have no hope:* meaning *Heathens*, 1 *Thess.* 4. 13.

Thou shalt not kill.

3. *Duration.*] Then for the third and last: *There is*, indeed, *a Time to mourn*, saith the Divine Preacher, *Eccles.* 3. 4. And 'tis *but a Time:* it must determine; and not be for ever. To set the Bounds thereof, precisely, may perhaps be hard. But note; The Sacred Writ doth call them *Days of Mourning*; and not *Years*, nor *Months*; no, not *Weeks*. Which manifests, that we ought to keep within a great deal narrower compass, than many practise. I know, * *Josephus* tells us; That *Thirty Days was its stated time*, among the People of God of old. And we are more

Gen. 27. 41. & 50. 4, 10. Deut. 34. 8. Esay 60. 20.

* *Antiq. Jud. lib.* 4. *cap.* 8.

more certain; that *Moſes* was mourn'd for juſt ſo long by the the *Jews*: as both himſelf, and they, had done before for *Aaron*. Of this we may conclude; when once our mourning hinders cheerful attendance upon God, and due reſpect to Men; Its time is then expired; and it muſt determine. Deut. 34. 8. Numb. 20. 29.

Obj. 2. 'Alas! *in my Condition*, may others 'ſay, *Having loſt ſo dear a Friend, my Care, and* 'Pains, *and Prayers; my Hopes, and Expectati-* 'ons *too, are all made fruſtrate. What ſhould I* 'do, *but as once* Jacob *ſaid, Go down into the* 'grave *mourning?* Gen 37.

Anſ. I anſwer, in the Apoſtle's words upon another occaſion, *I ſhew thee a more excellent way.* Rebuke thy Soul, as holy *Aſaph* did his own; and good *Jacob* ſhould have alſo done; and all *pious Perſons* ought to do, when they are tempted to think God hath no kindneſs for them, becauſe ſeverer Providences reſt upon them: *This is mine infirmity*, Pſal. 77. 10. 'Tis, in good truth, an Infirmity; and no little and inconſiderable Frailty, neither. It borders, at the leaſt, upon all thoſe faulty circumſtances of that Mourning juſt now ſpoken of: it cannot plead *not guilty*, to the Charge of Murmuring at God's good Pleaſure; and that too much, and too long alſo. For, is it fitting that God's Will be done, or yours? If yours; why are you Creatures, depending upon him entirely, and to be diſpoſed of by him wholly?

Nay,

Nay, why do ye play the Hypocrites, and mock him daily to his face; by saying, *Thy will be done in Earth, as 'tis in Heaven?* Do not the holy Angels, and *Spirits of just Men made perfect* both readily do, and readily acquiesce in, what *He* will have done? What if they be not obnoxious to your present Evils; are not ye in the assured expectation of partaking of their good e're long?

Besides, you are under a great Mistake. Your Care, and Pains and Prayers are not Frustrate: However your Hopes and Expectations be reckned off Because God's Ends are answered; and they should be yours. Bend but your Wills to his: and they are fulfilled As for thy Prayers, how can they be Frustrate; either to the Deceased, or unto thyself Surviving? If *all things work together for good to them that love God:* this Providence also must do so; *Suppose thee such.* And then (to pass by lesser matters) Thy Friend is not (properly) Gone away; only, Gone before a little. Nor are Requests denyed, because not answered as we expected. God hath a better way to grant them in, when he doth not give them to us our way. Our dearest Lord *was heard in that he feared:* altho he dyed the Death, against which he so earnestly prayed, *Heb.* 5. 7.

Obj. 3. 'There are those also with whom 'this Language is to be found. *I have lost at* 'once *my dearest Friend, a comfortable Estate;* 'nay, *my Subsistance and Support. How should* 'I bound *my Lamentation?* *Ans.*

Anſ. Being taking for a Perſon fearing God, thou deſerveſt the Reproof that was given St. *Peter* by our Saviour: *O thou of little faith; wherefore doſt thou fear? Doth man live by bread alone, and not by every word, that goeth out of the mouth of God?* Matt. 4. 4. *whoſe is the world, and the fulneſs thereof? who feeds the fowls, and cloaths the lillies?* And art thou leſs to God, than they? But there is worſe than this at bottom of this Complaint. The guile and fraud herein is plain to Man, much more to God. It is not the Friend, but what was His (it ſeems) thou doſt Bewail the loſs of. But to ſpare thee there. Who is it bids us, *Take no thought for our life; no nor for our body?* Matth. 6. 25. Let not Anxiety ſeize us either for *food*, or *raiment?* For if our Souls be now (as they ſhould be) in Heaven; our Bodies will make good ſhift enough on Earth; never fear it. Our Gracious Lord, who cannot deceive us, bids us; *Seek God's kingdom, and his righteouſneſs above all things elſe*; and he hath paſs'd his Word, and is both able and willing to make it good; that *all things neceſſary ſhall be added to us*, Verſe 33. thrown in, as *Thread and Paper* at the Grocers, without diſtracting Cares about them. Nature is contented with a little. And Satisfaction, Peace and Quiet with our Portion is never attained by an Addition to, but a Subſtraction from, our fond Deſires. I need not ſend theſe People to that Cloud of Witneſſes recorded in the Book of God, who in their greateſt wants could

could caſt their care on Him, and found ſupply enough in him. That bleſſed Name (whereby we all are called) although he made the World and had it wholly at his Command, and Beck, was notwithſtanding *pleaſed well* enough, when he *had not where to lay his head*, Mat. 8. 20. But the Morals of a very Heathen will cry ſhame on ſuch a Chriſtian. Thence you ſhall often hear much to the purpoſe; * of contemning Wealth, and being content with a mean Eſtate. What danger's there; and what ſafety here: and therefore how far from being repined at are lower Circumſtances in the World? The Divine Oracle aſſures us; *That Godlineſs with Contentment is great gain.* And if we be Godly, whatever Portion God ſhall allot unto us; that will certainly ſerve; and ought to pleaſe; us. And ſo this Storm is calm'd.

* *Dici poteſt de Divitijs, quod in Medicum gloriſum dictum eſt; tutum remedium morbum gravorem facit.* Plut. de Cupid. divit. *Is maxime divitijs affluit, qui minime indiget.* Sen. de Pauper. *Non in Paupertate vitium, ſed in Paupere,* &c. Id. de Remed. fort.

Obj. 4. 'The Comfort of my Life is gone; ſay 'others, *What Counſel, Support, Refreſhment,* 'and Encouragement, was *I* wont to have from 'the true Sympathy of ANOTHER SELF? 'But all is vaniſh'd, and gone for ever. And who 'can bear it?

Anſ. And is't no Comfort, that thou ſometimes hadſt ſuch a Comfort; and didſt ſo long injoy it? Methinks, thy cheerful Thanks for that,

that, ſhould ſome-what check thy doleful Moanes for this. But to deal more plainly: Is't ſo indeed? No marvel, if a *Jealous God* would not endure a *Rival* with him. His Kindneſs, he is liberal of, unto his People: but *his glory, he'll not give unto any other*, Eſa. 42. 8. We often loſe our Mercies, becauſe we dote ſo much on them, as to have God too little in our Thoughts by reaſon of them. And ſhould he like that? when Reaſon and Religion tell us; the Creator ſhould have the Throne within our Hearts: the Foot-ſtool ſerves the Creature well enough. Nay, this is real kindneſs to *us*: that God diverts the muddy Streams, to make us run to the Cryſtal Spring. When the loving Maſter will not give the Trencher-ſcraps unto his honeſt Servant; but the while allows him a well-ſtor'd Larder: hath he any cauſe to take that ill? Or if an affectionate Husband liketh not to have his Pocket pick'd; whilſt he gives his Wife the Keys to take out Gold and Silver at her own diſcretion: hath ſhe cauſe to make Complaint for this? No doubt, but every good Man will ſay to God with *David*: *All my ſprings are in thee*, Pſ. 87. 7. And with the Apoſtle to our Saviour: *Whither ſhall we go? Thou haſt the words of eternal life*, John 6. 68. Now ſuch a Providence calls aloud upon him, to haſten to his *Fountain*, and his *Store-houſe*. Indeed, ſuppoſe a Saint in this diſtreſs had not a God to go to; or were he bar'd acceſs unto his Preſence; when

when his deſired Comfort were gone for ever: there might, I grant, be a little pardon for his Impatience. But (bleſſed be the Lord) *His Eyes* are ever looking after him; *His Ears* ſtand always open to him; *His Hands* are ſtretched out continually for him; and *His Heart* never without yearnings towards him: and ſurely, this is ample Compenſation for, and abundant Conſolation in, the worſt Affliction; if People will duly apply their Souls to God. 'Tis that He aims at; and urgeth us unto. *Call upon me in the time of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou ſhalt glorifie me. Caſt your burden on the Lord, and he ſhall ſuſtain thee. Be careful for nothing. But caſt all your care on God.* What loſs cannot he make up *in Specie*, if he pleaſe? And if he doth not give the *Idem*; the *Tantundem* is as good. To be ſure, tho *Elkanah* ask'd his Wife only; was not *he better than Ten Sons?* God, who is his Peoples Portion in all Diſtreſſes, is better than *Ten thouſand Worlds.*

Pſal. 50. 15. Pſal. 55. 22. Phil. 4. 6. 1 Pet. 5. 7.

Puta Deum dicere, quid habetis quod de me queri poſſitis? Sen de Provid. c. 6.

Obj. 5. 'But, *'twas my woful Folly; or elſe 'mine Evils had not come upon me. That Loſs, 'This Sickneſs, The Other bad Accident, had ne-'ver happen'd to me, if becoming Prudence had 'been my Conduct. Such Means would have pre-'vented all my Miſery. Now: Woe is me, for my 'hard Hap!*

Anſ.

Anſ. Remember firſt: *That Hap was certainly God's Hand.* For Fortune, Luck, and Chance, are meer Heathen Deities: altho the Wiſer *there* did laugh thereat. The Almighty, Wiſe, and Righteous Providence governs even our Inadvertencies, and Miſtakes; and directs them to the iſſue they arrive at. Nay, all Events whatever, are ſo much influenced Thence, as to be *Effected*, or thereby *Permitted. Such hand it had about the ſelling* Joſeph *into* Egypt; *and the villanous Murder of the Bleſſed Jeſus:* that neither *That* nor *This* were brought to paſs without it. Yet wicked Men, and Devils, are the ſole Efficients of all Moral Evil. Sin is hateful unto God; and Sinners too, who perſiſt therein; and they ſhall be puniſh'd to a ſad Eternity for the ſame. So, tho it be higheſt Blaſphemy once to conceit it, that God is the Author of Iniquity; yet He undoubtedly ſets Bounds thereto, as to the Raging Sea; and ſaith, *Hitherto ſhalt thou come, and no further: and here ſhall thy Proud Waves be ſtaid.* Wherefore, notwithſtanding, All our Culpable Errors are to be truly, and ſadly, repented of; with Supplication for God's Pardon: yet we may not overlook his Hand in ordering of them to their Iſſue. Under which, *being humbled duly, we may expect ſeaſonably to be lifted up*, 1 Pet. 5. 6.

--- Sed te nos facimus, Fortuna Deam, Cæliq; locamus. Juv. Sat. 10.

Gen. 45. 8. Acts 4. 28.

Pſal. 45. 7. Pſal. 5. 5. Hab. 1. 13.

But

But most especially; let's never forget the Lesson that our blessed Saviour taught his most dear Disciples: That *not one of the poor, little, and* * *despicable Sparrows fell to the ground without our Father:* his License, Order, or Appointment, that is: *Fear ye not therefore; ye are of more value than many Sparrows*, Vers. 31. is our dear Lord's Inference thence. And so we may conclude; That the most unhappy Accidents, in Estate, Health, Relations, or any other way; are of God's wise and good sufferance, or sending, to us. Then, as for the Lives of the Saints of God: if *their Hairs be all numbred*, v. 30. and *their Death be precious in his sight*, Ps. 116. 15; as both are certain; with what exactness will he keep the reckning of their Abode on Earth? Surely, no single Day, nor Hour, nor Minute, shall carelesly, or casually, be cast away. Yea, doubtless; not only *our times are in God's hand*, Psal. 31. 15; but *our days are determined, and the number of our months are with the Lord: our bounds are appointed, which we cannot pass*, Job 14. 5. And then we need not fear, but that we shall reach up thereto: whatever may be thought unto the contrary. Indeed, the *Will of Purpose* in the Lord is unknown to us, until the Event declares it. And 'tis our Duty, only to attend his *Will of Precept*. We must use lawful Means which he approves: yet be content, that the Almighty's pleasure be effected by them.

Matth. 10. 29.
* σφοδία. *Magna hic emphasis Diminutivi.* Bez.

And

And as for *Means* suggested to be omitted; Either it was really so; or not. If not: how childish is it, to complain for nothing? If so: 'twas either through thy fault, or not. If this; *Not through thy fault:* (And how unlikely is it, that the fear of God, and love of one so dear, would suffer Means to be omitted wilfully?) Suppose it thine Unhappiness; 'tis not thy Sin; and should not be thy Torment. Therefore such Fears and Jealousies, which often overcome afflicted Spirits, must be withstood, and banished.

Obj. 6. 'Some yet may say: *But I am ignorant* 'of God's meaning towards me, in his heavy Dispen-'sation. *And what to do, but Mourn, I know* 'not.

Ans. Admit, thou art to seek therein: wil't make thy self yet more uncapable to find it out? This is the readiest way of all thereto: Excessive Grief both blinds and deafs the Soul at once. And what is to be seen, in Midnight-darkness: or heard, at the Cataracts of *Nilus*; or by the beating of a Drum? Thou raisest Clouds, and makest Clamours within thy Bosom, that put thee to confusion and astonishment. Be therefore Master of thy self in patience, and thou mak'st it possible to enquire to purpose. Whil'st *Job* was in this Hurry, he saith indeed to God: *Shew me, wherefore thou contendest with me*, Job 10. 2, &c. But this came from such discontent, that it return'd without its Errand. Tho afterwards,

when he came fully to himself, and dealeth in a quiet, humble, and submissive way with God; *abhorring himself* for his past frowardness and impatience; *and repenting in dust and ashes*; he quickly meets with blest success, unto abundant satisfaction: as may be read in the Chapter quoted in the Margin.

Job 42. 6, &c. per tot.

Observe beside; it is no easie matter, *ordinarily*; and doubtless, *oftentimes*, impossible, to assign the special Message of such, or such a severer Providence toward those that truly fear the Lord. 'Tis true, it sometimes happens, that the Judgments carry such visible Tokens of the Sins that sent them, written as it were in Capital Letters on them; that it becomes no difficulty to understand the special Errand that they bring. You saw it the Case of Holy *David*, spoken of before. But commonly, and for the most part, as I said, 'tis otherwise. And the Pious, in affliction; if they find not full satisfaction in our Saviour's words to *Peter*, spoken of before; *What I do, thou knowest not now; but shalt know afterwards*: yet I am very confident, that under the smartest, darkest, and most uncouth Providence; *let them but loath themselves in their own sight for all their offences; be humbled under the mighty Hand of God; run to the Fountain open'd for Sin and for Uncleanness; die more unto the World, and lay up their Treasure, and Heart too, more in Heaven;* hate

Example 4. Supra.

have none but God Above; *and God above all* Below; *unto them:* Let them make this their Business under their saddest Sufferings, and persevere thereat: And most undoubtedly, as God obtains his End, they shall not miss his Mind. Thus all Afflictions shall serve his greater Glory; and surely issue in their greatest Good.

And then; I conclude with confidence; This will not only still a distressed Saint; but turn his weeping into laughter, and put off his Sackcloth for more beautiful Garments; and exchange his Lamentations into Songs of Praises unto the God of his Salvation; who *commandeth light to shine forth out of darkness*, and will bring Good from Evil, to them *are good and upright in heart before him.*

3. The last Thing undertaken was; *Some Guidance for the better Application of the whole unto our selves for good.* And this I shall dispatch in these two or three following Inferences:

Infer. 1. Since it is so, *That*, &c. Then certainly, pious People must not expect all Halcyon Days on Earth; nor flatter themselves with hopes of a Summer that shall last their life, without any storm or cloud attending it: but they must reckon on't, and be content, to take their share of trouble that happens to them. How otherwise, could it be a Duty on them; *To be quiet in Distresses, if none should ever reach them?* Assure your selves; that tho best Christians be not in all respects *True La-*

zarus's: yet must they, with Him, expect to have their *Evil things here:* and happy are they, that they shall be sure of their *Good hereafter.* A Traveller in a strange Country, far distant from his Native Soil: A Mariner sailing a long and dangerous Voyage on the Ocean: and especially, a Soldier, that hath a Crafty, Cruel, and Powerful Enemy to contest withal, must not befool himself with hopes of Ease, and Rest, and Quiet, and his Heart's desire, without all thoughts of trouble ever coming near him. This were so silly a *Self-Flattery*; as must at last make Men to rue it sadly with too late Repentance. Are we not going out of *Egypt*, and through the Wilderness, towards the Heavenly *Canaan?* Is not this World, wherein we all are lanched, more like the Earth surrounding *Main*, than the Three Leagues Red Sea which *Israel* passed through? And are not the Devil, World, and Flesh, All mortal Foes unto us, and of too much strength to do us mischief? Can we be free from trouble then? Nor is this any just discouragement unto serious Piety; as he well knows that hath not lost already the things before discoursed on at large. It only serves to make us stand unto our Arms, that we be not surprised; and whets our Courage, the better to ingage the Difficulties that we meet with. Our blessed Saviour never meant to drive Men from him; when he tells them plainly, That they *should count their Cost*; resolving

ſolving to *bear their Croſs*, *and follow him*; *as they would be his Diſciples*, Luke 14. 27, 28, &c. The Goſpel gives moſt full Aſſurance; and experienc'd Chriſtians know right well; that true RELIGION weighs *down to the ground* whatever Inconveniences lye in the Scale againſt it. Nor is there any Compariſon to be made, *betwixt the ſufferings of this preſent time, in an holy courſe*; *and the glory that ſhall ſucceed hereafter*, Rom. 8. 18. The Proportion is much nearer betwixt loſing a Braſs Counter, for gaining of Ten hundred thouſand Guinea's. And what a Bargain worth the having is That? But ſtill; a Chriſtian's Life is a Continual Warfare. Suppoſe there be a preſent Truce: who knoweth but that a few hours hence it may be broken? And if we are ſurpriſed then at unawares; of how *great* dammage may it prove unto us: if not *irreparable?* Look therefore for Afflictions, if thou be truly Godly; not with a *frightful*, but a *fixed* Mind. Look for them ſo; and whenſoever they come, they will not then look ghaſtly on thee.

Infer. 2. *Since*, &c. Then the worſt of Sufferings that can befal God's Servants are not ſo terrible as the World doth commonly reckon; and perhaps, the Sufferers themſelves, may take them for. This followeth plainly: becauſe, that Wiſe and Gracious God, who looks for nothing from his Peo-

ple, but what's moſt juſt and equal, doth yet expect, that they ſhould be *ſedate* and *quiet* under all Diſtreſſes. Wherefore they cannot, duly, be accounted as amazing Prodigies, and monſtrous Portents. Indeed there is no Affliction but is grievous in its own nature. And many go a great deal nearer to the quick, than others do. Yet ſtill; the very worſt upon a pious Perſon hath not *Plague-Tokens* with it: is not Incurably Mortal. He *that hath ſwallowed up Death in Victory*, Eſay 25. 8. gives us encouragement to ſay of the very worſe of their Diſeaſes; *This Sickneſs is not unto Death*, John 11. I mean not, as to *Temporal*: but 'tis not, to *Eternal* Death. For the plain truth is: for ſuch, to *die on Earth*, is nothing elſe, but to *live in Heaven for ever*. Then no Diſtreſs, whatever it is, can be truly *deadly* to him that lives in Chriſt. No: as the Hand that gives the ſtroke, is ever ſet on work, and guided too, by Infinite Love and Wiſdom: ſo likewiſe, there is the *Good Samaritan* always ſtanding by, and ready to apply the *Balm of Gilead* with tender Pity, and ſure Succeſs. I know, that a wicked and malignant World, inſpired from Hell, and thruſt on by the Devil thereof, will make what havock they are able on God's People; and then erect their Trophies, and Tri-

Tantum intereſt non qualia, ſed qualis, quiſq; patiatur. S. Aug. de Civit. D. 1. 8.

Triumph upon the Spoils that by themſelves are made. Yea, tho their own Life doth vouch themſelves ſworn Vaſſals unto Satan; yet under ſuch Calamities, they will pronounce the Righteous but *Meer Pretenders unto God.* And this, they count, is perfect proof thereof: in that they think, they have them at their own Mercy; whoſe *Mercies*, we are ſure, *are* very *Cruelty.* The Man after God's heart could fare no better at their hands. *His Enemies, that lay in wait for his Soul, took counſel together, and ſpake thus againſt him: God hath forſaken him: for there is none to deliver him*, Pſal. 71. 10, 11. But their Meaſures fail'd them there: as they will do elſewhere, upon like occaſion. The laſt Verſe ſaith, *They are confounded; they are brought to ſhame, that ſeek my hurt.* The Wicked, are *God's Staff* indeed: yea, and they are *his Rod.* And how frequent (if not conſtant) is it; for the merciful Providence to break that *Staff*, and burn that *Rod*, wherewith his Children had been ſmitten? Sure I am; that the Proud and Powerful King of *Aſſyria* (altho he feared no ſuch matter) was forc'd to feel it, *Eſay* 10. And neither Turk, nor French, nor Pope, can hope for better; when the *Seaſon* is. Faith then ſhould baniſh Fear; and ſuffer Terror to take no hold upon us. Improve *That*; and 'twill be able to ſcorn *the fury of the Oppreſſor*, *Eſay* 51. 12, 13; tho Earth and Hell, toge-

ther, abet him. Nay, and All other Evils, that may happen, *then*, cannot be *diſmal* to us. If *neither Life nor Death*; *not Angels, Principalities, nor Powers*; *neither preſent things, nor future, nor height, nor depth, nor any Creature, can ſeparate the truly Pious from the love of God in Chriſt*, Romans 8. 38, 39. What ſhould be greatly Terrible and Affrighting to them? I may therefore well conclude with the Apoſtle *Peter*'s Charge; *That none of us think it ſtrange, concerning the ſevereſt Providences; ſuppoſe it ſhould be a fiery Tryal; as if ſome ſtrange thing happened to us*, 1 Pet. 4. 12. For a Chriſtian's Sufferings, whatever they are, cannot ſeem Uncouth and Horrid Matters; if our paſt Diſcourſe be well conſidered by us.

Infer. 3. Since, *&c.* Then in the laſt place: it ought to be the care and labour of us All, in all our ſad'ſt Conditions, to acquit our ſelves, not only as *God's Creatures*, but as *good Chriſtians alſo*: i. *to be ſtill and quiet under the ſevereſt Providences of God.* Being the *Work of his Hands*; All that we have and are is his own, and due to him; both when, and how, he will pleaſe to call for it. But, being *the Price of his Blood* too: his Right is double; and there can be no diſpute; but that we are, and ought to be moſt abſolutely, and moſt righteouſly, at his Diſpoſal. But I ſhall not ſtay on Arguments to perſwade hereto; being fully of opinion, that thoſe

those on whom the former Discourses will not have sufficient Influence to convince them of their Duty in the point; neither would they believe themselves obliged, *should a Messenger from the Dead come, and acquaint them with it.*

All I shall therefore further meddle with at present will be, to do what service I am capable of, in giving the best Directions, that I can, for our more ready Obedience unto God in this important Business; *Of being still and silent under the greatest troubles that befal us.* There are but three or four (though many more are ready) that I shall insist upon: and they are these,

Direct. 1. Make sure, thy Soul be furnished with effectual, and saving Grace: that thou be not barely an Appendant *unto Jesus Christ*, but implanted *into him*; and hast devoted thy self entirely to him. Then, being found a Christian in Sincerity; either there is little danger of thy being plunged into that Gulf; or great presumption of speedy getting out again. But otherwise, there are no hopes of special Help from Heaven. I grant, indeed, if any People have attain'd to Stoical *Apathy*, or are the Masters of the ancient *Roman* Gallantry (as 'tis called); they then may *seem* to out-brave the worst of Evils on them, with a quiet and Christian Resolution. But, alas! 'tis nothing so, at all. The Principle, whereby the former is acted,

acted, puts of *true Man*; and what moves the latter is an utter stranger to the *true God*. And neither of them deserve the Name of *true constant Fortitude*; but indeed of a *fool-hardy desperate Stupidity*. The Christian Valour neither rashly courts a Misery, nor declines it basely: but being come, as it feels the smart, so it knows who sent it: and that much worse was well deserved; but yet, this coming on a gracious Errand, it bears up under it, with out Repining at it; and waiteth quietly a seasonable Deliverance from it, and great Advantage by it. But now, this Herb grows not in the Common-fields of Christianity. 'Tis not the *High-way*, nor the *Thorny*, nor the *Stony Ground* will bring it kindly forth. No: it must be a *good and honest Heart*, made so by special Grace, where it arriveth to perfection. If thou hast now a bare *Name to live when thou art dead*; and takest up with *a form of Godliness, but without the power thereof*; there are no hopes, thou shouldst have help, and be kept steddy when violent Winds and Waves assault thee. But if Religion be thy Business; the biass of thy Heart be Heaven-ward; and Jesus Christ be the Loadstone that thy Soul stands to, and only fixeth at; why *then*, as thou art Upright with thy God, thou also art become even *God's Delight*, Prov. 11. 20. Now *unto the Upright there ariseth light in darkness*, Ps. 112. 4. The reason

Matth. 13. Luke 8.

reaſon is, *Light is ſown* (by the ſure Husbandman) *for him*; *and gladneſs for the upright in heart*, Pſalm 97. 11. And what God ſows, muſt ſure grow up, and ſoon be ripe too. Wherefore we are called on, to *look upon it*, as that which never faileth to our Obſervation: *Mark the perfect Man, and behold the Upright: for the end* (however his beginning, or middle time ſhall prove) *of that Man ſhall be peace*, Pſal. 37. 37. And all know, 'tis *the End crowns all*. O that we, every one, would rouze up our Souls from a *luke-warm Temper*; and by no means ſettle under the leaves of a bare Profeſſion, without the power of a living Principle of Holineſs in our Hearts, always making Heaven-ward whence *it* came. This would ſo fix us on the Rock, that tho' the Tempeſts ſhake, they ſhould never overturn, us. We are certainly elſe upon *a ſandy bottom*; and that hath no ſecurity. How can we ſtand in an evil Day, of Life, or Death, or Judgement; except we are thus provided? Think ſadly of the woful Diſappointment to the *fooliſh Virgins*; *that had their lamps indeed, but had no oil*; *and were ſhut out, when they thought ſure of entring in*, Mat 25. 10. And that thou maiſt fare better, truſt not in outward Form; but get the Truth, and Life of Grace, which God alone approveth: and thou art ſafe.

Direct.

Direct. 2. Be not indulgent to thy fleſh, let not thine earthly Tabernacle be too much cocker'd, and fondled by thee. 'Tis not intended here to prohibit Men from running out into *exceſs of Riot*, and following of the diſſolute Courſes of the Debauchees of the Evil Age we live in. No: *thoſe Spots are not the Spots of the Children of God*; to whom I now am ſpeaking. They are the manifeſt Brand-mark ſet upon the Herd belonging to the Bottomleſs Pit. *Who think it ſtrange*, and *ſpeak evil of the others*; *becauſe they will not be as vile that way as themſelves are*, 1 Pet. 4. 4. But what I plainly mean is; that Chriſtians, who will bear Diſtreſſes to the beſt advantage, ſhould not allow themſelves unto the utmoſt Bounds of Chriſtian-liberty, in things that are ſo far from being ſimply evil, that they are indifferent; yea, good and neceſſary in the due uſe thereof. Such are both Reſt and Labour, Meats and Drinks, Habits and lawful Recreations; with other things like theſe. He that treads upon the very Line of ſome large Circle, may ſoon ſtep over. 'Tis very dangerous to run upon the Edge of the Bank, leaſt ye fall into the Brook. *All that is lawful, is not expedient*, 1 Cor. 6. 12. the Apoſtle teacheth. Moderate Sleep and Exerciſe refreſh Nature, and preſerve Health: but exceſs, in *that* brings fuel to Corruption; and in *this* conſumes the Spirits. The ſober uſe of wholeſom and meet

Food

Food and Liquors is neceſſary to our ſubſiſting: but Intemperance, in Delicacies and Varieties ſpecially, brings Sickneſs and Death. So Cloathing hides our Nakedneſs, and defendeth from the Cold: but Garriſh and Antick Faſhions are a Vanity full of Michief to ourſelves and others. Nay, Recreation, that ſhould be only uſed to fit for Buſineſs; how often being exceſſive doth it untune for that, and rob us too of our choiceſt Jewel, *Precious Time?* And yet amongſt good People, ſome may be found (I wiſh the Number were much ſmaller) that are ſo coy and delicate; that nothing but the *beſt*, and *moſt* of every thing will content them. Nay, and 'tis ſo; that the Sun muſt not ſhine, nor the Wind blow, nor the Rain drop on ſome of Them! Theſe are the ways ſo to Emaſculate poor Peoples Souls, that the lighteſt load is able to ſink them to the ground. And how ſhould great Diſtreſſes then be *born*; and ſtood up under, with ſuch an even and fixed Reſolution as they ought? The holy Apoſtle doth indeed allow *a little Wine for the ſtomack's ſake, and for thoſe infirmities* of that good Man, whoſe drink was nothing elſe *but Water*, 1 Tim. 5. 23. But otherwiſe the ſelf-ſame Perſon he calls upon, to *endure hardneſs, and as a good ſoldier*, 2 Tim. 2. 3. Are we not all Chriſt's Souldiers: and if we will be good Souldiers; muſt we not follow, and be like unto our Leader? O how unlike

unlike him, do we acquit our selves; who court this World, which he so scorn'd and trampled on; and pamper the Body, which he made drudge of to the Soul, and in God's service! Is't probable, at this rate, when Poverty, Sickness, Persecution, or Death assault, (and how near any of them may be to us, who can tell?) we should be *dumb and open not our mouth*, submitting quietly to his Father's Hand, as he did constantly? At least, let's labour to tread in his Apostle's steps; *keep under our body*, (as it were by Club-law) *and bring it into subjection*, 1 Cor. 9. 27: that the vain Fancies, and fond Appetites there may be restrain'd and curb'd; and our Souls may fasten and abide on what will fully satisfie them, and never can be rifled from them.

Direct. 3. *Lay not thy treasure up, on earth; but in the heavens*, Matth. 6. 19. Excellent Counsel of our blessed Lord! *For where the Treasure is, there will the Heart* (*i.* the Man himself) *be also.* And if a Man hath once his Heart: *viz.* his Love, Delight, Desire, and Hopes, as high as Heaven, with God and Jesus Christ above; he can't be so concern'd with any Disaster here below, as to be disorder'd greatly by the same. As he that looketh down from some high Steeple, sees every thing beneath him but as a small and little matter: so Earthly Good and Bad must necessarily seem to one, *whose Conversation is in Hea-*

Heaven. 'Tis certain, that there are those Mountains in the World, whose tops will be serene, and clear, and calm; when Thunder, Storms, and Lightning, threaten to mix Heaven and Earth together at the lower parts thereof. Could we take off our Affection from things Below, to set, and always keep them upon what's Above: how should we live as in a constant Sun-shine? When Pestilence, Famine, Sword, should range the Earth; when Poverty, Sickness, Death, should knock at our own Doors; how little would the Disturbance be unto us? Poor *Archimedes* was so intent upon his Mathematical Studies, that he knew not when his City was storm'd, and taken. And, verily, a Christian, that gets his Heart full bent towards Heaven will find the distracting Hurries of the Earth slip over him with but little observation by him. The holy Apostle *Paul* was certified by the Holy Ghost, in every City he pass'd through, *that bonds and afflictions waited for him at Jerusalem*, and yet he saith, *none of those things so much as moved him*, Acts 20. 24. The *Joy in finishing his Course*, and the Reward after it, made even *his life it self*, tho likely to be lost, but a little matter with him. We are very sure, that *Moses* refused being a King's Grandson, and chose rather an afflicted state with the People of God,

Nihil cruis sentit in nervo, cum animus in cælo est
Tert. ad Marc. cap. 2.

God, than *sinful Pleasures* in a Prince's Court: valuing the *Reproach for Christ* as a Better Estate than the Exchequer of *Egypt*, Heb 11. 24, 25, 26. But what was that which betrayed so wise and good a Man into such a Paradox, *in the World's Opinion?* Why, let them think so still: but his Judgment was truly Orthodox, notwithstanding. *For he had respect unto the recompence of reward*, Verse 26, *fin.* And *sure*, to be Heir apparent unto the Crown of *Egypt*, deserves not to be compared with an undoubted Title to God's Kingdom. And the Delights in Heaven are so surpassing, that all Earthly Joys are not insipid only, but nauseous, fulsome; Carrion and Poison, to them. Which having his Heart affected with, by a Believing Prospect thereof; what was't to him, to throw off the Courtier, and take up the Clown? Nay, worse? To skulk and hide a while for scaping of those Blood-hounds that were hunting after him? And, at the last, to flee his Country, and abide those many dangers and distresses that attend a Banish'd Outlaw? All that the Earth could do against him, you see, how little 'twas unto him; because his Treasure was in Heaven: *he had respect to the recompence of reward.* Were Christians heartily making after him; although they should not fully over-

Seculi hujus quem non decipit prosperitas non frangit adversitas. S. Aug. de verb. Dom. Serm. 42.

overtake him; how light and eaſe would their many great and heavy Burdens lye upon them? To conclude; The *Author and Finiſher of our Faith, for the Joy above, that was ſet before him, endured the pain, and deſpiſed the ſhame of the Bloody Croſs, whereon he ſuffer'd*, Heb. 12. 2. And would the Chriſtian duly look to Chriſt, he ſurely, would be like him, much more than he is.

Direct. 4. Laſtly: Let Sin be more uneaſie, and be ſure thy Sufferings then will be eaſier far. Wert thou worſe able to endure Corruptions, thou would'ſt be better to abide Afflictions. When once Iniquity is our greateſt Burden; all others will be little felt. The very reaſon why Diſtreſſes ſometimes triumph is, becauſe we have not made a Conqueſt over our Tranſgreſſions. They are theſe that bring Tribulations to us: and make them ſit more heavy on us, when they are come. Guilt is a moſt heavy Load to an Awakened Mind; although Another's Eye ſhould not be able to eſpy ſo much as a light Feather on its back. But the weight muſt needs be much increaſed, when Actual Puniſhment cleaveth unto Guilt. Whether the good Woman of *Zarephath*'s words, ſpoken to the Prophet; (*Art thou come to call my Sins to remembrance; and to ſlay my Son?* 1 King. 17. 18.) do not imply; that a freſh cognizance took by Conſcience of her faultineſs towards God, had imbittered the Affliction to her; tho it ſeem probable; I will

not determine. But it is very plain; that This *added* Chains (as I may call them) to the Confinement of *Joseph*'s Brethren: For their open Confession is: *We are verily guilty concerning our Brother; in that we saw the anguish of his Soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear. THEREFORE IS THIS DISTRESS COME UPON US*, Gen. 42. 21. Whence it must follow: would we be more Innocent, we should be less Unhappy: most certainly; our Misery would pinch and gall us less. What made our blessed Lord so Easy, Patient, and Submissive, in those worst of Evils upon him? Verily; because He had the best of Souls within Him. No Sin had ever touched it: and how should Sorrow fetch Blood from it? O, let us *grow in Grace*; and then our bitter Cup shall have no Dregs to touch our Lips. Those are reserved for the *Graceless Ones*; *to wring them out, and drink them up*, Ps. 75. 8. But thriving Christians, tho' they must have Burthens, shall not sink under them. Such *wait upon the Lord* to purpose: and so *renew their strength*. They are enabled *to walk without fainting; and run and not be weary*, Isa. 40. 31. Wherefore *abound ye in the work of God, and your labour will not be in vain*, 1 Cor. 15. 58. Not only, by a more diligent Attendance on all Ordinances; but especially, about increasing Faith, inflaming Love, confirming Hope, perfecting Patience, and setting, and keeping the whole Heart on Heaven. This would advance

the

the Spirit to its due Soveraignty; and reduce the Fleſh to juſt Subjection. And what can bring Diſorders then? This will draw back Sin's Fuel; and then its Fire goeth out of itſelf. But the neglect hereof, is throwing off our Armour, inſtead of girding it cloſe about us: and then we are eaſily Shot, and fall.

Meer Nature, with all the ſtrength that Reaſon brings it, proves a weak Creature; at the laſt however. But Grace, and when like *David waxing ſtronger and ſtronger*, overcomes all Difficulties in the way to Glory. And tho' a *Pharoah* be behind, a Sea before, and a Wilderneſs on both ſides; it will bear up the Soul until it *ſee the Salvation of its God.*

The Sum of all my Advice is this: 1. Make ſure of Saving Grace, and being Right at Heart: 2. Be not indulgent to the Fleſh, nor fond upon thy Earthly Tabernacle: 3. Lay not thy Treaſure up on Earth, but in the Heavens, and let thy Heart be with it there: 4. Laſtly; Let Sin be more Uneaſie to thee, and thy Sufferings will be eaſier far. Grow but in Grace, and thou ſhalt Out-grow all Grief that can poſſibly ſeize thee here. For Then, thou wilt be the fulleſt Eccho to the Pſalmiſt: *I was dumb; I opened not my mouth: becauſe*, &c.

FINIS.

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